

**E U R O P E**  
**BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS**  
**AND AFTER**  
( 1919 — 1951 )

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## BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS (1919-39)

(Dr. Shanti Prasad Verma)

**The Peace Pacts.** The period between the two World Wars can be regarded as a period of failures. After a World War lasting four years and the total defeat of those who were named the aggressors, it was natural to expect that at least for a long period to come there would be no World War. But actually the result was that for a period of twenty years there was a state of uncasiness in Europe after which another World War, more ferocious than the previous one, broke out. Whatever may have been the immediate and long-term reasons for this War, it is undeniable that the responsibility for this War will also have to be placed on the Pacts which followed in the wake of World War I. The victorious Allies forced Germany to accept a treaty which actually was an imposition upon it. This was probably the first time when the victorious nations mutually agreed to the terms of a treaty and then called the defeated enemies and ordered them to accept it as it was. The circumstances in which the representatives of Germany were made to sign the armistice were insulting in the extreme. Presenting them, Clemenceau in his brief speech said, "You have prayed for peace and we are prepared to accept your prayer." To win the peace all the nations, who are gathered here, had to pay a very heavy price, and we have all unanimously decided to utilise all our resources to get the assurance that we shall receive a satisfactory solution for our just demands." After this brief speech by Clemenceau, Germany's Foreign Minister, Count Rantejo, attempted to stand but could not, and then he read a written statement sitting, "We are fully aware of the power of hatred which we have to face here and we have

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also heard passionate demands that the victorious nations will realise all the indemnities from us, who are defeated, and severely punish us as criminal. It has been demanded from us to confess that we alone bear the responsibility for the war, but any such confession on my part would be a falsehood<sup>1</sup>

Germany wanted to prove that it could not be made solely responsible for the War, and if her crimes in the course of the War were unpardonable, it is equally true that the responsibility for the death of lacs of people as a result of the blockade after November 11 must be laid on the head of the Allies. Think of that when you speak of guilt and punishment<sup>2</sup>. Criticising numerous clauses of the peace proposals, Germany said that the terms of peace were against the principles enunciated by Wilson on which basis Germany agreed to lay down her arms. But Germany's pleadings were not listened to<sup>2</sup>. Lloyd George made an attempt to lighten the peace terms but no body gave attention to it because no body wanted that much time be spent for the settlement of the peace terms. In the meantime, the cabinet changed in Germany, and on June 28th the new German Foreign Minister signed the 'Versailles Treaty' unconditionally.

The Paris Peace Conference and the treaty signed there have been very much criticised and many writers have expressed the opinion, that if this treaty had been more reasonable, Europe could have been saved from many immediate troubles. Actually it is not proper to blame the treaty, because it was a product of the War and it cannot be viewed detached from the War. After a war of four years, which cannot be compared with any other previous war, and in which millions of people of different countries and classes gave their lives, very naturally an atmosphere of hatred was created and this feeling was not confined merely to the victorious allies, but was also deep down among the defeated nations. The treaty terms were drawn up in this very atmosphere. The tired and quarrelsome politicians who drafted those terms in haste, were themselves consumed

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Riddel *Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After*, p. 73

<sup>2</sup>. Against this it was said that Germany was never given the assurance that the peace would be based upon the Fourteen Points of Wilson. It was asked whether it was prepared to accept those Fourteen Points and it had replied in the affirmative. The Allies and United States of America had, in fact, entered into an agreement among themselves to implement these Fourteen Points — D C Somervell *Between Two Wars*, p 10

with the fire of hatred, and they looked to the people of their countries who were all full of hatred. Under these circumstances, nothing short of a miracle could have made the treaty terms any better. These terms have been criticised from two points of view. On the one hand, the opinion gained ground in Britain, as also in the United States of America, that the terms were too hard for the defeated nations, and they all held Clemenceau responsible for it. On the other hand, Clemenceau firmly held to the opinion that Germany can only bow before brutal force. Most of the people in Great Britain and the United States of America could not agree with Clemenceau's views. In France, however, from the very beginning the opinion prevailed that the treaty terms were too mild. The French felt that to maintain the very existence of Germany is to always keep alive the danger of war in Europe. Actually, the treaty terms were not so hard—the terms which were comparatively hard were not subsequently implemented—as they were insulting. Nothing could remove the firm conviction of the Germans that they were cheated. Clearly, the principles enunciated by Wilson were impracticable and were never put into practice. It became still more impossible to implement them after the United States of America refused to help in this work and in carrying forward the work of the League of Nations. Some more points were added to the Fourteen Points enunciated by Wilson, and the manner in which they were later explained by his confidant Col. House, and the way in which the Allies understood them further reduced their importance. Under these circumstances, it was natural for Germany to believe that the terms on which it was asked to surrender were subsequently completely changed.<sup>1</sup>

**The Character of the League of Nations.** The failure of the 1919 treaty terms is to a large extent laid at the head of the League of Nations. That the League of Nations did not have an auspicious beginning is an undoubted fact, the United States, mainly responsible for its birth, never became its member. Germany and other defeated nations were not allowed to become its members. Russia, following the Communist Revolution, became neutral. Even in its early years, the League of Nations became merely an organisation of Great Britain,

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<sup>1</sup> Commenting on the treaty terms, Marshal Foch said, "This is not peace. This is armistice for twenty years" (Churchill: *The Second World War*, vol. I, p. 6).

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the British Colonies, France, Italy, Japan and other victorious nations. Even the big nations had no faith in it. Lloyd George regarded it merely as a toy. In spite of all these, however, the League of Nations could have yet carried on its work if it did not suffer from a fundamental weakness, which actually was the result of current political trends. The League of Nations was a loose organisation of independent and sovereign States which could not compel any nation to take any step against its wishes. Consequently the League failed to make any big nation work in a manner which was against its interests. Generally, it has been accepted that the soldiers won the War and the politicians lost the peace, but this statement can only be partly true. The politicians have to grapple with other politicians and these others, like all politicians, cannot rise much above the viewpoint of their countrymen. Consequently, it becomes impossible for them to undertake any work which is not supported by the people. We thus easily reach the conclusion that the Paris Peace Conference, the peace terms settled by it, and the organisation of the League of Nations—all reflected the soul of the times, and naturally represented all those defects and drawbacks which were the characteristic features of the post-War Europe.

**The Democratic Revolution in Germany.** The First World War did not merely affect the international relations, it profoundly influenced the internal life of the different countries of Europe as well. Germany was an imperialist country, but there was a powerful socialist trend in its public opinion, and from earlier times it had a class of people which believed in democracy. As the War became more and more ferocious, the view became still more popular among the common people that whoever should be victorious in the War, the common man would suffer more and more. There were repeated strikes in Germany during the War. The communist ideology was also propagated more and more. On the other hand, Germany was faced with military defeats. Kaiser asked Prince Max to form a new ministry and he included in his cabinet two socialists, Ebert and *Skhedemaan*. Max was directed to enter into a treaty with the enemy without accepting defeat which was, of course, an impossible task. After this, there was a Naval Mutiny and then a wide-spread revolution. Kaiser fled to Holland and the old royal dynasty ended. Max resigned. Ebert became the Chancellor and for some time Germany had



a Socialist Government <sup>1</sup> After this there were elections to the National Assembly in which although the largest number of people were socialists yet the majority belonged to the liberal parties which believed in democracy. The most important work of this National Assembly was to sign the Peace Treaty After *Skhedemaan* resigned, Bower formed a new Ministry and he signed the Peace Treaty unconditionally

**Fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.** The Austro-Hungarian Empire, from its very inception, was a queer conglomeration comprising mainly of Germans and the Magyars, and a number of other smaller nationalities When Austria-Hungary joined the war, these various nationalities got an opportunity to raise their heads In the meantime Emperor Francis Joseph died, and was succeeded by Charles VII He exerted himself to the utmost to bring an early end to the war The fall of Bulgaria and the possible surrender of Turkey further worsened the position of Austria Within the Empire the revolt of the nationalities gained momentum In fact, it would be appropriate to say that the great Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed not because of any outside attack but because of its own internal contradictions <sup>2</sup> On October 5, 1919, an independent Polish Government was proclaimed at Warsaw On October 14, Dr Benes proclaimed from Paris the creation of the first Czech Government which was immediately recognised by France and the United States of America Austria attempted to establish a federal government, but now there was hardly any time left for it On October 21, German-Austria proclaimed its Independence and established a Provisional National Assembly On October 23, the Croats announced their Independence at Fiume On October 24, Italy launched its attack The Emperor sent to President Wilson a communication asking for peace on the basis of Czech and Yugoslav Independence. Soon after a revolution commenced in Hungary. On November 4, the Emperor had to accept the terms laid down by the

1 See International Goodwill Communique No. 130 of April 1912, 140 "The German Revolution"

2 Victor Wallace Germans in his book *Austria of Today* writes "The Hapsburg rule did not commit as many evil deeds as it revealed its incapacity to do any good thing From the very beginning it was a negative type of rule which believed in doing nothing There was little feeling of active revolt against it If the matter would have been confined merely between the Hapsburg rulers and the people, the administration could have continued for generations" (p 8)

Allies. During the crisis, the Germans in Austria declared the creation of an Independent Republic, for in their eyes no other way was left open to them. The Czechs and the Yugoslavs were attacking at the borders, Italy had occupied Southern Tyrol and was entering the boundaries of the country. Besides, there existed a real danger of a Communist Revolution. Dr. Karl Rainer was made the Chancellor of the new Austrian Republic and Adler became its Foreign Minister.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor, escaped and found an asylum in Switzerland. Despite this great change, however, Austria could not escape the consequences of defeat. According to the Treaty of Saint-Germain, it had to surrender one-third of its German territories to Czechoslovakia and Italy. It was also called upon to pay war indemnity and to accept innumerable economic restrictions. During all this time, the internal conflict and confusion was continuously increasing. In Hungary a Communist Revolution had succeeded, and preparations for a similar revolution in Austria were in full swing.

As a result of the revolution in Hungary, a democratic government was established with Count Karolly as its head. Emperor Charles accepted this change but Karolly could not fulfil his responsibilities. His decision to disband the army resulted in attacks of the Serbian, Czech and Rumanian armies on Hungary. Karolly immediately fell. The economic crisis was deepening every day. On November 19, 1919, there was a Communist Revolution under the leadership of Belakun, and he immediately got control of the State-power. A Soviet type of administration was established, but in actual fact Belakun had all the powers in his hand. Reconstruction of the country on Communist line was quickly undertaken. During all this time, Hungary's war with Rumania continued and the Rumanian armies were continuously pressing forward. On August 4 they occupied Budapest. Belakun fled away to Vienna. The Communist Revolution and occupation of Hungary by Rumania made the condition of this country very pitiable. Under these circumstances there was a counter-revolution under the leadership of Admiral Horthy. And now the Communists began to be crushed. On March 1, 1920, a new Government was established under the leadership of Admiral Horthy. On January 25, a National Assembly was convened. The National Assembly

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution* (English translation published by Leonard Parsons in 1925).

signed the Treaty of Trynnon presented by the Allies. As a result of this Treaty, Hungary was deprived of two-thirds of its territory and 60 per cent of its population. A large majority of these were Magyars. Hungary also had to accept responsibility for payment of war indemnity. Her economic conditions really became miserable.

**The New States of East Europe.** After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, four new states came into being which are generally called the Succession States. These are Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia. Austria was not included in the list. These new States were not called upon to pay any indemnity, but they were asked to pay something to the Allies in lieu of their freedom. They were also called upon to treat well their minorities. Of these new States Poland had the highest claim. Till the 19th century it had an independent existence, after which it was partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria. This partition, however, failed to crush the sentiments of Polish Nationalism. During the War this national feeling was further intensified. Pilsdusky rose in this atmosphere and he organised sections of the Polish Army and attacked Russia. He was also always opposed to the domination of Germany. After occupying Russian Poland, Germany announced the creation of an independent Polish State under its hegemony, but the Polish leaders did not accept this situation. After the Communist Revolution in Russia, the Russians accepted the right of Poland to freedom. The Allies also recognised it and President Wilson included it in his Fourteen Points. After the revolution in Germany, Polish independence was declared and Pilsdusky became the first head of the new national government of Poland. The Paris Peace Conference viewed liberally the fixation of Polish boundaries. According to the Versailles Treaty it got the major portion of Posen and the southern parts of Prussia. In order to reach Danzing it was given a corridor in German territory. Poland, however, was not satisfied with these concessions and in years to come it continuously quarrelled with its neighbours for fixation of boundaries. Czechoslovakia was in a way a new State, but in actual fact it was a new edition of old Moravia. There were no differences between Czechs and the Slovaks. The First World War gave them a golden opportunity to liberate themselves from the clutches of Austria. Masaryk and Benes established contacts with the Allies and the Czech soldiers in large numbers deserted Aus-

tria and joined the enemies. There were separate Czech units in the armies of Russia, Italy and France. Britain, America and Japan had recognised its independence from the very beginning. On October 14, 1919, Masaryk announced the creation of an Independent Czech Republic from Washington. On November 16, there was a session of the National Assembly at Prague, which unanimously proclaimed the creation of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. Masaryk became its first President, Kromer the Prime Minister, and Benes the Foreign Minister.

After following opportunist policies for two years, Rumania joined the Allies in the war and it was given the assurance of some territories. But during the War it was badly defeated. With the victory of the Allies, its fate brightened up. Now its boundaries had increased to twice its previous territory. The Great War not only brought a change in its foreign policy but also profoundly influenced its internal life. Many democratic changes were introduced: laws were enacted to give land to the tillers and direct elections on the basis of adult franchise were introduced. Yugoslavia was constituted in the south of Austria by combining the Southern Slavs, Serbs, Croats and the Slovene peoples. When the War commenced, many Yugoslav leaders left the country and established a Yugoslav Committee which kept alive their demand for independence. When Italy entered the War, the Yugoslav Movement received a setback because in the secret London Treaty (27th April, 1916) the Allies promised to give Italy territories where more than 7 lac Yugoslavs lived. At the same time conflicts developed between the three nationalities constituting the Yugoslav nation. Consequently, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed, the Yugoslavs could not unitedly press their claims. However, determined efforts to remove the internal differences on the one hand, and the principle of national self-determination, enunciated by President Wilson, on the other, strengthened the Yugoslav Movement. But the final fixation of the boundaries of Yugoslavia could not be completed till the Treaty of Rapallo. Thus it was that on November 12, 1920, on the debris of the Austro-Hungarian Empire grew up the four States of Eastern Europe which in subsequent years profoundly influenced international relations.

**The question of War Indemnities.** The terms of the Peace Treaty had laid down that all war expenses will have to be borne by Germany, but the task of deciding the amount was

left to the future. This work was done in various conferences of the Allied powers. From the very beginning it became obvious that there was a fundamental difference between the approaches of Britain and France. In the eyes of Britain, Germany had been so thoroughly defeated in the War, and had been given such a heavy punishment that it was now meaningless to expect from it any further indemnities. Britain wanted Germany to return to its normal conditions, but it was tied to France, and France could not be satisfied till it received all its War expenses from Germany. France did not in the least wish that Germany should return to its pre-War position because that would be dangerous for France. France knew that Germany could not always be kept crushed, but at the same time it wanted to maintain its hegemony over Europe as long as possible. On the other hand, there was neither any enthusiasm in Germany for the payment of War indemnities, nor did it have any sense of moral responsibility for it, and it was obvious that it would pay only as much amount as could be realised from it by force. In 1921, at Paris, the Allied nations demanded from Germany that it should pay, in the course of the next 42 years, 11 million pounds, and when Germany expressed its inability to do so, it was decided that Dusseldorf and two other big cities situated at the southern bank of the Rhine be occupied. A scheme was prepared to occupy the entire Ruhr Valley, but at another conference held at London following a separate agreement between France and Germany, this proposal was held in abeyance, and in August the payment of indemnities also commenced. For this, however, Germany had to take a loan from England. Another difficulty was presented by the fact that for the payment of the indemnities it was necessary to sell the German Marks in exchange for foreign currencies. But the Mark was continuously falling in price.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to say whether the Mark went down because of the payment of War indemnities or there were other reasons for it. But a direct consequence of the fall in the value of the Mark was that Germany could not pay the War indemnities. It paid a certain amount, then did not pay anything for a long time, then again paid a minor amount, and then expressed its inability, again in October 1922 it demanded freedom from payment for 3 to 4 years and a reconsideration of the whole situation. In this entire period the price of the Mark was continuously falling,

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<sup>1</sup> Before the War the price of the Mark was nearly equal to a rupee. In 1923, a rupee could purchase 6,00,000,000 Marks.

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it affected other European currencies as well and signs of an economic crisis were visible all over Europe. When France did not get its share of the indemnities at the proper time, it militarily occupied the Ruhr Valley, the biggest industrial centre of Germany. France expected that Germany's industries would continue as usual and it would get the required amount from them but there was general strike in the factories with the moral support of the German Government, and the people adopted a path of peaceful resistance. The British Government was strongly opposed to the occupation of the Ruhr <sup>1</sup>

**The question of International Debts.** Along with the question of War indemnities was linked the question of international debts. America had started paying loans to the Allies even before entering the War. As a result, when the War ended, England was indebted to the United States for a billion pounds, and France, Italy and other European Allies had to pay an even a higher amount to England. On serious thought, this question of international debts would appear to be meaningless, because it was the responsibility of all the Allies who gave their everything in order to win the War, and each one had paid a heavy price for the War in some form or the other. France had shed comparatively more blood than England and the United States. Britain was prepared that if America does not demand from it its amount, it will also not demand its loan from the European countries. At the same time all the European nations were determined to realise full indemnity from Germany and therefore the United States was not prepared to forego its loan to them. Very soon it became clear, however, that there existed very little possibility of realising any amount from Germany. Through the Balfour Declaration, England announced that if America would not realise its loan from England, England would not ask other nations to return its loan. Ruhr was in complete French occupation for the whole of 1923 and part of 1924, but from the economic point of view it was a failure. The efforts made by France in this area to arouse anti-German feelings also met with failure. At the same time, the economic condition of France was deteriorating. Under the circumstances, the administration of France passed into the hands of the liberals.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Reparations and International Debts* by Reginald Mackenna (International Goodwill Communique No 131, December 1923), p. 571.

In the meantime, an agreement had been reached between Britain and the United States on the question of War loan. As a result, a committee was appointed with an American official named Gen. Dawes, to solve the problem of War indemnities. The Committee prepared a new scheme in which the payment of indemnities by Germany was given a certain system.<sup>1</sup> In Britain also, the Government had changed and Ramsay MacDonald had become, the Prime Minister of the first Labour Government of Britain. It convened another conference in London in which Germany and other nations accepted the Dawes Plan and France and Belgium agreed to evacuate the Ruhr. After this, the payment of indemnities proceeded smoothly for 5 to 6 years. The reason for this was that during these years Germany received from different nations, and specially from the United States, huge capital by way of loan, in order to develop its industries. In all, Germany received more loan from the United States than it paid to other countries by way of indemnities.<sup>2</sup> In 1929, the whole question was reconsidered by another committee under the chairmanship of another American and the scheme formulated is famous as the Young Plan. This Plan, however, resulted in creating differences among the Allies. A year later an unprecedented economic crisis engulfed entire Europe which ended all these schemes and created those conditions in which Nazism emerged.

**France: Search for Security.** It was really surprising that even after such a Great War, Europe did not develop a sense of security and it was least visible in France. France had defeated Germany with international co-operation, but the War had also revealed that compared to France, Germany was more powerful. What would happen if France was left to itself by its Allies? Clemenceau had once said "There are twenty millions of Germans too many." The French military experts always held the opinion that so long as Germany had both the banks of the Rhine, it can attack France any time it wants. Clemenceau had demanded an independent Rhineland at the Paris Con-

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1 See *The Dawes Report on German Reparation Payment* and *The Geneva Conference on the application of the Dawes Plan* by George A. Finch.

2 According to Churchill, in all Germany paid from its funds £1,000, but in order to help it in the payment of indemnities it received during 1926-29, £1500 from the victorious nations and there existed no hope of its repayment.

ference, but this he could not get. All the fortifications on the left bank of the Rhine were, however, destroyed. France could not be satisfied merely with this. It demanded assurances from England and the United States for its security. To this end a draft agreement was prepared, but in the meantime the United States withdrew itself from European politics and along with this the British assurance also automatically lapsed. Under the circumstances France glanced round the European Continent for new allies. On September 7, 1920, it entered into a military agreement with Belgium. It fomented a rebellion against Germany in Rhineland. It recruited large numbers of soldiers from North Africa. France also began negotiations with Poland and Czechoslovakia. In September 1920, it entered into a military pact with Poland. It was no more necessary for it to depend upon England. When Briand began negotiations with Lloyd George, he had to quit his post and Poincaré became the Prime Minister in his place. On 25th January, 1924, he concluded an agreement with Czechoslovakia to the effect that in case of moves for the unification of Germany and Austria, or the restoration of monarchy in Germany and Hungary, they will meet together for discussion. On June 10, 1926, he entered into an agreement with Rumania, and another agreement was concluded with Yugoslavia on 11th February, 1927. All these agreements were the results of single-handed efforts of France.

**Collective Efforts for Security.** At the same time, collective efforts were made for European security. After the efforts of about a year, in September 1926, the League of Nations prepared the draft for a Mutual-Aid Pact which was discussed in the League Assembly, but it was opposed by Britain and therefore it could never be implemented. The British Prime Minister, Ramsay Macdonald, was of the opinion that a better way than such a pact would be to raise the material powers of the League of Nations. Soon after, at the inspiration of Benes, a new scheme, famous as the Geneva Protocol<sup>1</sup>, was

1. For the original text of the Pact and its analysis, see "International Goodwill Communique" No 255, dated December 1924. In Communique No 272 of September 1925 will be found the objection of Chamberlain to the Pact, which was raised in the meeting of the League of Nations at Geneva in March 1925. In this Communique will also be found the reply of Ramsay Macdonald to Chamberlain's objection on April 10, 1925.



prepared under the auspices of the League of Nations, at the same time it was decided to call an international conference at Geneva on June 25, 1925, for disarmament discussions. In the meantime, with the fall of the Labour Government in Britain, it refused to sign the Geneva Protocol. The new Foreign Minister of Britain Austin Chamberlain, said that acceptance of this Protocol would mean that England would be bound to send troops to any part of the world wherever any conflict arose. As a matter of fact, England had taken over such a responsibility even before signing the Charter of the League of Nations, but now British public opinion had become dead set against involving itself in the troubles of other countries.

On the other hand, Germany itself was trying to get assurances regarding the security of its Western frontiers, because Germany also had no less fears of France, and the recent policies of France, if anything, had enhanced such fears. Actually, as early as December 1922, Germany had made certain efforts in this direction, but not much attention was given at that time. In February 1925, Germany again declared that it would be prepared to enter into an agreement with England, France and Italy, to get each of the four countries to declare that at least for a certain fixed number of years, none of them will enter into war with another. Germany was prepared to assure that it would keep its western frontier as it was. On the basis of this proposal, a historic conference was held at Locarno on October 5, 1925, where, after 10 days' labour, five treaties were signed<sup>1</sup>. During the past six years, this was the first occasion when the representatives of Germany could talk to representatives of other nations on terms of equality. An agreement was signed between Germany, France, Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Accordingly it was decided that in future all outstanding questions between these countries would be solved through arbitration. The Locarno Treaty was regarded as an important landmark in European reconstruction. England accepted to take a big responsibility upon itself. Germany again got a place of prestige in international relations. France was now free of the fears of a German attack but as ill-luck would have it, when France seemed to be comparatively free from outside troubles its internal situation deteriorated day by day. By 1925, its economic conditions worsened. The

<sup>1</sup> Churchill has called the Locarno Treaties as the "high water-mark of Europe's Restoration." See *Second World War*, Vol I, p. 27.

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fall of Harriot was the signal of the coming storm. After this French ministries fell like autumn leaves. Poincare was once again made the Prime Minister, Briand became the Foreign Minister and Maginot became the War Minister. Maginot started the construction of the famous Maginot Line on the borders of France and Germany, but this fortification could not prevent the German armies entering France *via* Belgium. In point of fact, the greatest influence in France at this time was of fear—fear of being left alone high and dry, fear of a German attack, fear of an economic crisis, fear of Russia. Surrounded by fears on all sides, this unfortunate country at this time had not a single leader, who could show it the correct way.

**Italy: The Fascist Revolution.** The object of Italy's entry into the war was different from the objects of Britain, France or Russia. Before it was the problem of security against Germany. Italy actually wanted to acquire the remnants of the Hapsburg Empire. It got a lot in the War but it expected more. At the time of victory it was accorded an insulting behaviour. A feeling was gaining ground in Italy that although it had won the war it had lost the peace. The traditions of democracy had never been strong in Italy. Under the circumstances Fascism emerged. Harold Butler has written "Fascism arose in Italy and Germany and its reasons can be traced to the War and its consequence, which created in the lower middle class youths a feeling of revolt against the difficulties created and the prospects of destruction gaping before them. They had no future, their families had lost all their capital, there was no place for them in the trades and the prospects for economic betterment were so remote that they could not think of a married life and a civilised existence. When they were not only offered jobs but also were presented with an ideal for the economic and moral reconstruction of their nation, the best among the youths felt that they had got something which had made their lives worth living and which was more inspiring than merely earning some money. This was in fact a bright era for selfless and limitless national service."<sup>1</sup>

The originator of this ideology was Benito Mussolini, the son of an iron-smith, who began his life in a small school as a teacher and later entered the journalistic field. He took an active part in the War. He fully utilised the disappointment

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1 Harold Butler: *The Post Peace*, p. 282-83

in the wake of victory for increasing his political power. Before that the Fascist Party was established in 1918 to fight Bolshevism and to re-establish social rights. The members of this party were people of all types—soldiers discharged from the army, socialist agitators, workers, students, middle-class folks of cities and villages, big landlords of Southern Italy and industrialists of Northern Italy. Mussolini succeeded in uniting them through his brilliance. In 1920-21 there were continuous fights between the Fascists and the Socialists. The condition of Italy was deteriorating day by day and the democratic government was failing to control them. The socialists were preaching anarchism and the Government could not crush them. In the meantime, Mussolini succeeded in enrolling large number of members in all departments and places. In the autumn of 1920, the situation deteriorated to such an extent that Mussolini decided to march on Rome with his 40,000 strong military Fascists. The Government demanded of the King to enforce Martial Law but the King refused. The King invited Mussolini and asked him to become the Prime Minister. This was a bloodless revolution, but it profoundly influenced the political, social and economic life of the country. In the beginning, Mussolini agreed to keep the constitutional government as it was, but gradually all the democratic institutions were liquidated and total dictatorship was established in Italy. There is no doubt that under the Fascist regime Italy registered all-round progress<sup>1</sup>. Dishonesty and slackness was mercilessly removed from the administration, the power of the army was strengthened, and Italy's prestige rose in foreign countries. In 1923, Mussolini completely changed the system of elections, as a result of which the Fascist Party got a complete majority in the National Parliament. Matteotti, the leader of the Socialist Party, charged the government of defiance of the electoral laws and demanded the dissolution of the election, but three days after his speech Matteotti was murdered. By 1925, complete State power in Italy passed to the Fascists and Mussolini began his stern rule over the country. All the political parties were suppressed. Mussolini had a firm faith that before the State the individual had no existence. About the democratic system of administration, he felt that it was a plaything for the rich nations of Western Europe. He looked

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<sup>1</sup> See Vera Michele Dean. *Fierce Rule in Italy* ("Foreign Policy Reports" April 15, 1921).

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with contempt at majority and he had the conviction that the genius of the people could adequately be expressed by a civilised class. It looked as though Fascist Italy was determined to achieve all those high ambitions which could not find any expression in democratic Italy, and it was clear that in the coming storm the Italians would be with Mussolini.

**International Relations in Central Europe.** We have already referred to the sudden collapse and disintegration of the great Austro-Hungarian Empire. On its embers arose four new States, namely Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia. Along with these, Austria and Hungary also continued as two small countries. The condition of Austria was so pitiable that its neighbours could not entertain any fears on its account. But the situation of Hungary was different. Hungary itself used to be opposed to the domination of Austria but at the same time it wanted to keep under its domination those nationalities which had now emerged as independent States. It was natural, therefore, that these new States lived under constant fear of Hungary. To defend themselves from this constant danger, the neighbouring States began their organisation. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania joined hands to form "The Little Entente"<sup>1</sup>. It would not be probably quite correct to say that the only object of this small organisation was to oppose Hungary. As Dr Benes said, "Its another object was to work for economic reconstruction." Benes was its chief inspirer. It was he who first went to Belgrade and entered into the first agreement with Yugoslavia. From Belgrade he went to Bucharest. Rumania laid the condition that it would be prepared to tie itself to such an organisation only when an agreement was reached with Poland and Greece. When, however, there was an attempt to restore the old monarchy in Hungary, it immediately expressed its wish to enter into an agreement with Czechoslovakia and this new organisation took its final shape on July 2, 1921. In the beginning this organisation was intended as a security against Hungary, though later it was involved in the politics of big nations, specially France and Italy. In the meantime the approach of Hungary also underwent a change and it became a member of the League of Nations. Thus, this small orga-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Little Entente* ("Foreign Policy Report," Part 4, No 14, September 14, 1928).

nisation in itself became a commendable ideal of international co-operation. These small nations also entered into identical agreements with other countries Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia entered into a pact with Italy and Czechoslovakia with Austria But when these small nations appeared to follow the path of peace and reconstruction and were prepared to contribute their humble mite on the basis of mutual co-operation towards international good-will, it was difficult for the big nations to keep in check their high ambitions

**The Miserable Fate of Germany.** We have already referred to the democratic revolution in Germany In fact, it is difficult to call it a revolution. Germany's military might had been broken and no other way was open before it except surrender President Wilson had very clearly stated that he would not be prepared to negotiate peace with Kaiser. When Kaiser abdicated, Germany hoped that it would get comparatively better terms from the Allies After Kaiser, the rulers of Bavaria, Saxony, etc., one by one, left Germany As a German writer said, they disappeared almost as the light goes off when oil is exhausted A Republic was declared in Germany, but the reason for it was not the faith of the people in democracy It was adopted as a measure of convenience, and it was merely a superficial change The self-proclaimed Socialist leaders, who got the State powers, were actually socialists in name, they were, in fact, persons of a liberal and labour views Ebert, Skhedemann, Notske—none of these had the capacity to lead a great nation at a time of crisis There were real Socialists also in Germany led by Ross Luxembourg and Liebknecht But they were also not very capable persons and were easily crushed A superficial approach would indicate that this was a victory of democratic forces over communism, but in actual fact it was the first step in the march towards counter-revolution.

In February 1919, a democratic National Assembly was elected to prepare a democratic constitution. But the method adopted for the election cannot be really called democratic Out of 400 persons elected, only 185 had real faith in democracy. After preparing the Constitution, the National Assembly accepted the Versailles Treaty. It is difficult to say what type of treaty would have been imposed upon the defeated nations in case Germany had won the war The treaty with France in 1871, and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Russia in

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1918, reveal the attitude of Germany. But when the Allies placed the entire responsibility of the War on Germany and demanded complete indemnity, then a wave of sorrow spread over the whole country. That this treaty was accepted by the Weimar Constitution, which had set up a democratic administration, became a reason for bringing a bad name to democracy in Germany. Even after the Armistice, economic blockade of Germany continued, resulting in the death of lakhs of Germans, including women and children. In 1920, some monarchists raised the banner of rebellion, but they were crushed by the Government with the aid of workers. In 1922, Germany took a major step to overcome its international isolation. It was the Rappalo Treaty with Russia. Under this treaty Germany began to send its military officers for training in Moscow. These developments indicate the future growth of Germany, but there is no doubt that the condition of contemporary Germany was deteriorating day by day. The demand for indemnities and the occupation of the Ruhr inspired an economic revolution in Germany. The continued fall of the value of the Mark chiefly affected the middle class and its rising discontent, inspired it to support the extreme nationalists on the one hand, and the Communists on the other.

Hitler first appeared on the scene during the period of occupation of the Ruhr although at that time he was not given much importance. On November 8, 1923, he was arrested at Berlin in connection with a riot and sentenced to imprisonment. During his prison-life, he began writing his book, *Mein Kampf*, which later profoundly influenced Germany. Hitler was released after a few months and, in the meantime, Germany appeared to be well set on the road to reconstruction. The occupation of Ruhr by France had proved a failure from the economic as well as the political point of view. In 1924, the Dawes Plan was put into effect, which once again brought some stability to the economic life of Germany. For a few subsequent years Germany could pay some indemnity at proper time, but it was well aware of the fact that outwardly, however attractive the Dawes Plan might appear, it actually was a method of exploiting Germany ruthlessly in a planned manner. Because of its failure to pay War indemnities at proper time, all Germany's foreign capital was sold out and the scheme of foreign surveillance, which was set up under it, could not be tolerated by any self-respecting nation. In 1925, old Hindenburg became

Chancellor in place of Ebert. This position he secured as a tribute to his military achievements. But it is undoubted that this was the second step towards counter-revolution, and about this very time the coming great economic depression was not far away.

**Soviet Russia Early Struggle.** Russia left its Allies during the War and, therefore, it was natural that they entertained a feeling of anger and opposition towards it. The policy followed by Russia after the Revolution further strengthened this opposition. The Allied nations openly supported the counter-revolutionary forces and economically boycotted Russia. As a counterblast, Russia organised the 'Third International' in order to spread Communist Revolution in the neighbouring countries. In Hungary there was actually a Communist Revolution for some time. There were powerful chances of a Communist Revolution in Italy and Germany and the Communist ideology appeared to gain ground in other countries as well. In the meantime, however, the economic condition of Russia began to deteriorate, and with great clarity Lenin announced his "New Economic Policy". Its main basis was co-operation with capitalists, and it also influenced Russia foreign policy. In December 1925, Zinoviev accepted in a speech at Moscow that the prospects of World Revolution had weakened and faded. Now Russia began to establish diplomatic relations with its neighbours. The Treaty of Tartu with Estonia, in February 1920, was the first treaty with a non-communist country. After this it entered into agreement with its border countries based upon assurances of non-aggression and non-interference. Such treaties were entered into with Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland and Poland, and later with Turkey, Afghanistan and Iran. As a result, Russia succeeded in establishing friendly relations with all its neighbouring nations but the big nations continued to view it with suspicion. In April 1922, Russia entered into a secret treaty with Germany at Rapallo, following which Germany recognised the Soviet Government and both Governments agreed to forego their war claims and also repudiated the pre-war debts<sup>1</sup>.

Gradually even in the eyes of the big nations, the danger of Russia was reduced. In March 1921, England entered into

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<sup>1</sup> F. Malbone to Graham Jr. *The Soviet Security System* (International Goodwill Communiqué, No. 252, September, 1929)

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a trade pact with it, followed by similar pacts by Germany and Italy. With the coming into power of the Labour Party in England, and the establishment of a Socialist Government in France, the attitude of these countries underwent a change. In February 1924, Britain recognised the Soviet Government. Soon after Italy, Austria, China, France, etc., recognised it, although the United States was not prepared to do so. With a change of Government in England, Britain also withdrew its recognition of the Soviet Government. Russia was no more worried about any international move against it. Soon after a new feeling appeared in the relations between Western nations and Germany resulting in the Locarno Treaties. Russia viewed this as a move to bring Germany under the British sphere of influence and isolate it. Under the circumstance, it was essential for Russia to strengthen itself internally as well as fortify itself against its neighbours.

**South-East Europe: State of Uncertainty.** There was no appreciable improvement in the condition of South-East Europe even after the War. All these countries were swept by a strong national feeling. But there appeared to be no desire for unity. The Versailles Treaty solved none of their problems. Serbia now had the broader shape of Yugoslavia. Rumania and Greece also increased in size. But Turkey was relegated behind East Thrace, and Bulgaria was most severely punished for siding with Germany. It was quite apparent from all these boundary changes that the fundamental basis of all agreements was to check all future possibilities of a German or an Austrian advance towards the South-East. This, however, created numerous complications. On the one hand, the minorities in Yugoslavia, Greece and Rumania were deeply dissatisfied and were almost in a state of rebellion, on the other, these nations entertained great fears on account of the possible course which may be adopted by foreign countries. Under the leadership of Kamal Pasha, Turkey completely engaged itself in internal reconstruction, but Bulgaria was full of feelings of vengeance. At the same time, Italy was looking with greedy eyes at the Adriatic and Yugoslavia. Really, the condition of these South-East European countries was pitiable, and this had further deteriorated on account of continuous internal troubles. In Greece, a state of uncertainty continued to prevail about the ruling dynasty. After the death of Alexander, Prince George ascended the throne, but very soon,



Constantine was declared king in his place. After that Greece had a military dictatorship, and after some time again monarchy was established Yugoslavia was a combination of three nationalities, the Serbs, the Croats and Slovenes. And although they had cultural ties, yet differences has risen among them. Two of their great leaders, Pascich and Radisch, could never co-operate among themselves. Analysing the situation in the Balkans, an experienced writer wrote "The relations in the Balkan, and the different Balkan problems are so complicated that if any two countries enter into any agreement, it is impossible for a third country not to have the suspicion that the treaty is directed against it . . . Briefly, it can be said that every country has a quarrel with every other country, and whenever any dispute between any two countries is settled it is interpreted to mean that these two countries want to keep their hands free in order to solve their disputes with a third country from a position of strength."<sup>1</sup>

**Russia: Achievement of Stability.** When the countries of Western Europe were busy in mutual jealousies, and those of South-East Europe, which were created to prevent any further expansion of German influence, had either become friendly with Russia or were engaged in their mutual quarrels, Russia was firmly increasing its internal strength and appeared determined to achieve a place of prestige in the comity of big nations. After the death of Lenin in January 1924, there appeared to be some prospects for internal disorder. His followers were divided into two groups. On the one side was Trotsky, Radek, Zinoviev, etc., and on the other were Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and others. But Stalin soon succeeded in gaining victory over Trotsky and his comrades, and became a powerful leader of the country. The fundamental difference between the two views was whether Russia should intensify its efforts for World Revolution or should try to make itself an ideal Socialist State, and thus become a living example of the success of Socialism to other nations. Stalin supported the latter view and got the support of all Russia.

Stalin did very useful work for the economic development of Russia.<sup>2</sup> By 1929, agricultural production in Russia

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1. David Mitrano: *The Possibility of a Balkan Locarno* (International Goodwill Communique, No. 229, April 1927), p. 170.

2. Vera Micheles Dean. *Soviet Russia*, 1917-33, p. 26-27.

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had registered a tremendous increase, and now it became possible to nationalise the properties of the upper peasants. But the Government of Stalin went about this business with great care. The Government gave the peasants tractors, other agricultural implements, and also the advice of experts. The Government's policy, on the one hand, was to exercise greater control on collective farming and, on the other, offer greater facilities to individual peasant. Thus along with collective production, the share of the individual could also be increased and his heartier co-operation secured. At the same time, the Government gave great attention to the industrial development of the country. This was absolutely essential in the interest of the country's security as well as for raising the standard of living of the people. Russia was faced not merely with the problem of rehabilitating the pre-War industries but also to build up new industries and manufacture capital goods for them. Russia did this work without foreign aid, only on the basis of the labour of its people. In 1928, its first Five-Year Plan was launched. It was implemented with great precision and the enthusiastic co-operation of the masses could also be organised for it. "The Five-Year Plan—in Four"—This slogan reverberated in all nooks and corners of the country. The scheme achieved unprecedented success. Many industries were established and huge dams were built. When the rest of Europe was passing through a great economic crisis, Russia could claim that its agricultural production had increased many times and its industrial development almost touched the level of the leading nation of the West, and not a single person remained unemployed in the whole of Russia. When the entire capitalist world was shaking to its very bones in a state of uncertainty, Russia achieved remarkable stability by following the path of Communism and dictatorship. Russia became like a steel wall which could not be affected by external attacks. But the problem of security had not yet been solved. In the meantime, Germany, on the basis of another type of a dictatorial state, was making all-out efforts to dominate over the entire Europe and was clearly challenging the situation in Russia. Under these circumstances, it became essential for Russia to come closer to the Western nations. But were the Western nations prepared to co-operate with it?

**The League of Nations : A Bird's eye view.** The League of Nations had small beginnings, but gradually it took the form of a wide-spread organisation. When its first session met at Geneva in 1920, 42 nations had become its members. It was decided that the League of Nations would meet at least once every year. This was an important decision. Up till now the sessions of no international organisation had been held with such regularity. In 1926, the British Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, declared that he would attend all the meetings of the League of Nations and the Foreign Ministers of Germany and France, Stresemann and Briand, followed him. When the 10th session of the League of Nations met in 1930, it was attended by nine Prime Ministers, twenty-one Foreign Ministers, one thousand diplomats and experts, and four hundred journalists. The first task of this great organisation was to prevent war and to solve those problems which could become a threat to peace. With this object in view, all its members agreed to refer all their quarrels to its decision. In order to solve legal disputes, an International Court was set up. Every nation was bound to accept the decision of the League of Nations, all member-nations were also bound to take military and economic measures against any nation which dared to challenge the decision of the League.

All these clauses were very important and it is acknowledged that in the first ten years of its life the League did contribute to the solution of some disputes. Mention may be made in this connection of the disputes between Finland and Sweden regarding Alind Island, the dispute between Yugoslavia and Albania, the quarrel between Poland and Lithuania about Vilna etc. In the last dispute, however, the League did not prove very effective because Mammal was forcibly occupied by Lithuania but ultimately it was forced to accept the decision of the League. The weakness of the League however, became clear in the Corfu crisis. The prestige of the League, however, was saved when Italy agreed to evacuate the Greek island of Corfu in lieu of a huge compensation. The prestige of the League rose when it successfully solved a dispute between Greece and Bulgaria. But this was its last success. In subsequent years, when the League had to face disputes involving big nation, it could not achieve any notable success.

Disarmament was now considered essential for a permanent prevention of war. The League of Nations made many

efforts in this direction, but never achieved any success, the reason being that there were great differences in the viewpoints of the big nations. In 1931, on United States' inspiration, an International Conference was called at Washington outside the League of Nations, for Naval Disarmament. The proportion of naval strength for the United States, Britain, Japan, France and Italy was kept at 5 5 3 1 75 1 75. Many sub-committees met to discuss disarmament of ground forces, and on February 2, 1932, a large International Conference met at Geneva. In the meantime, however, a great economic crisis had engulfed the whole world, and when Japan attacked Manchuria, the state of security was shaken. In Germany Nazism was making rapid strides. In this atmosphere this Geneva conference could not achieve any notable success. Even after 1931, it had become clear that the League was incapable of checking the ambitions of the big nations. In spite of its failure in the political field, however, it must be accepted that the League did much useful work in social, human and cultural fields.

**Germany: The Direction of Reconstruction.** When the League of Nations was engaged in creating an atmosphere for world peace, discontent and regret in Germany was resuming revolutionary proportions. The idea was gaining ground that Germany was defeated by treachery and was being treated inhumanly. The Germans felt that their national honour had been crushed, which could be avenged only by blood. The democratic administration which was established in Germany was not in favour of revolution, but it was not able to satisfy the nation. The economic condition of the country was disastrously worsening day by day, and the people were losing faith in democratic institutions. The feelings of racialism were being expressed in the form of a movement<sup>1</sup>. During the administration of Stresemann, Germany's relation with France and Britain had slightly improved. The Locarno Conference and Treaties are representative of this very period, but Germany was now coming to believe that in spite of its attitude of agreement and compromise, the other nations were not treating it with respect. Difficulties were placed in the way of its becoming a member of the League of Nations. After Stresemann's death, even

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1. See R.D O Butler. *The Roots of National Socialism*

this feeling of international co-operation decreased. It is undoubted that Stresmann was a real patriot and wanted Germany to progress, and he well knew that it could not be achieved through war. After his death the whole atmosphere in the country underwent a change and the faith in militarism increased. Three months after his death, Europe was caught in a great economic crisis. All these years, Hitler was engaged in organising his Nazi Party.

**Russia in Danger : Efforts at Security.** The growth of militarism in Germany presented a great danger to the Soviet Union. The 1925 Locarno Treaties had a great importance in international politics. They strengthened the feelings of security in Europe, but unfortunately the feelings with which these treaties were signed could not be kept up. France continued its policy of forming groups of small nations. Besides, at Locarno an assurance was given regarding the security of the western frontiers of Germany. It was equally necessary to assure the security of its eastern borders, but no steps were taken in the direction. In consequence, while in case of an attack by Germany on any country on its western border, all the countries of the League would have joined hands to fight it, no obstructions were placed in the way of a German aggression on its eastern borders. Under the circumstance it was only natural for Russia to arrive at the conclusion that Britain and France no doubt wanted to defend themselves, but they cared little for the defence of Russia, on the contrary, it was felt, they wanted that Germany should fight with Russia. In this atmosphere, in 1928, a Pact was signed to solve international disputes through peaceful methods. France's Foreign Minister, Briand, and America's Foreign Secretary, Kellogg, were mainly responsible for it. That is why it is very often called the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and since it was signed at Paris, it is also famous in history as the Paris Pact. This was an all-embracing pact signed outside the League of Nations. It repeated certain idealistic sentences, but hardly any step was taken for security, especially security in relation to Russia. Chicherin in his analysis of the Pact characterised it as a "West European Organisation" and "a Pact of aggressive design against Soviet Russia." It can be said that the Paris Pact represented the wish of the Western nations to maintain peace but it actually increased the fears of Russia and did not lessen its feelings of distrust against the Western nations.

**In The Shadow of Economic Crisis.** Plans after Plans were being prepared to settle international debts. From this point of view the Young Plan is of real importance. Through this Plan many of the drawbacks of the Dawes Plan were removed and Germany could assure a more systematic payment of War indemnities. It was decided that Germany will pay the entire indemnity in the course of the next 58 years. The foreign control over German economic policy, which was a feature of the Dawes Plan, was now removed. Further, Germany was given many facilities. Along with this, some decisions were arrived at in regard to international debts. The United States of America was mainly concerned with these debts. It had given huge loans to Britain, France and Italy. The debt amount as such was never sent to Europe. It was actually given in the form of armaments provided from America. These goods were sold to the European countries at high prices, and now that prices had fallen, it became inevitable that the countries of Europe should pay back 50% more or the cost of goods purchased. This situation should have changed after America's entry into the war, because now America had become a colleague of the West European nations. The United States, however, was not prepared to forego this loan. In the spring of 1930, the Young Plan had got the consent of the concerned governments that the question of payment of War indemnity by Germany and the problem of international debts should be combined. Soon after this a world-wide economic crisis set in. It now became impossible for the debtors to pay back the loans to America. The American President agreed to declare a year's moratorium, but at the same time it stopped advancing any further loans. Following this Germany stopped the payment of War indemnities and declared that it would never be able to pay back the amount. Thus, all of a sudden, the payment of international debts as also War indemnities ended. Gradually, all nations stopped the payment of debts to all other nations. Thus a very complicated problem was solved, but the deep economic crisis, which had ended this problem, had a tremendous and disastrous impact upon European political life, the first symbol of which was the rise of Nazism in Germany.

**New Tendencies in Germany.** Democracy was tried in Germany in an extremely hostile atmosphere. From the very beginning the extremist parties had a majority in the

National Assembly, and after a few years of democratic experiments, power came to the hands of one of these extremist parties of which Hitler was the leader. This man so greatly influenced later European history that it is essential to briefly describe his life. He was born on April 20, 1889, in a very humble family. Even in his childhood, he used to have fascinating dreams. On account of poverty he could not get high education. But from the very beginning, he was fond of art. At the age of 18 he went to Vienna where he learnt to hate the Jews. After studying the life of the Jews, he was convinced that they were mortal enemies of individualism, nationalism and racialism, and had entered into a conspiracy with Marxism with a view to ending humanity. When the First World War began, Hitler was working as a house-painter. He joined the War on behalf of Bavaria and won war awards. After that he became a member of a small National Socialist German Workers' Party, and gradually he not only became the leader of this Party, but also began to address huge audiences. The scheme of Nazism, which he founded, had already been prepared before and he carried its message to the German people. From earlier times, Germany had traditions of opposition to Jews. Hitler made this the plank of spreading his Nazism. Gradually, the number of his followers increased. He made 'Swastika' the symbol of his Party, and gradually Swastikas appeared everywhere in Germany, over houses, road crossings and streets. Hitler's great success was in the obtaining of the support of General Ludendorf. It was about this time that the famous 'Munich Beer Hall' incident took place by which Hitler attempted to capture State power, but failed, and was sentenced for sedition to term of five years. During his prison life, he wrote his *Mein Kampf*. His Party was banned.

After a few months, towards the end of 1924, Hitler was released and he once again got busy in organising his Party. The period from 1925 to 1929 was one of peace and prosperity in Germany. Its industrial life was expanding on the basis of foreign loans and its relation with Western countries was improving. In 1929, however, when the economic crisis began to engulf the whole world, Hitler got a golden opportunity to increase his strength. The national ideology of Germany and its historical traditions, the general hatred of Jews in Germany, the burning hatred of the Germans against the Versailles Treaty, Hitler's attractive personality,

his great powers of oratory, the organising genius of his colleagues—all these combined to strengthen the Nazi Party. Hitler's followers consisted largely of students and young men who saw before them a dark future. Apart from these young men, Hitler derived great support from the lower middle class. And Hitler preached his ideology in such a manner that it attracted all classes of society.

**Japan's Victory over Manchuria.** We have already discussed the first ten years of the life of the League of Nations. Towards the end of the first decade, its prestige had begun to fall. The big nations were engaged in achieving their selfish interests and nobody cared to maintain international peace. France was busy in creating organisations in co-operation with other European nations, and increasing its military power. As against this, England had very largely brought down its naval and air power. Reactionary and conservative parties were in power in most of the countries, and they had no faith whatsoever in the ideals of the League. Under Mussolini, Italy was openly denouncing the utter uselessness of a peace ideology. In 1934, Soviet Russia had joined the League of Nations, but it had hardly any faith in the principles of the League. In the absence of co-operation from the big nations, the League could hardly do much, and could, of course, do nothing in regard to big powers. The aggression of Japan in Manchuria thoroughly exposed the hollowness of the League. Manchuria was under Chinese rule, but Japanese imperialism had covetous eyes on it. As a result there was the incident of September 18, 1932, following which Japan occupied Manchuria, established the puppet Manchukuo regime, and left the League of Nations. It is not necessary to go into the details here, but whatever happened in Manchuria is a sad commentary on the League of Nations. As soon as the Japanese armies entered Manchuria, the Chinese representative informed the League Council about it. The Council adopted a resolution calling upon China and Japan to withdraw their armies from the war zone, but it had no effect. The Japanese armies continued to advance in Manchuria. The Council ordered that the Japanese armies should withdraw by November 16 but this also went unheeded. On January 18, 1932, occurred the Shanghai incident, when the Chinese ill-treated certain Japanese *Bukchus*. The Chinese promised to pay compensation, but Japanese started murdering the Chinese.<sup>o</sup> On



March 12, the General Body of the League of Nations decided that discussion of the Manchurian problem was within its right, and with a view to studying the situation a committee was appointed with Lytton as its chairman. In the meantime, Japan had annexed Manchuria and recognised it as an independent State under the Manchukuo. The Lytton Commission submitted a very able report, but Japan rejected it. Japan declared that it was essential in its interests to occupy Manchuria, and Britain supported this contention of Japan. On February 24, 1933, the General Body of the League of Nations accepted the Lytton Report and then Japan left the League. Thus the hollowness of the League was exposed to the whole world. It actually failed to prevent Japan from occupying a territory over which China had sovereign right. The apologists of the League of Nations declared that its efforts succeeded in at least localising the conflict. It is clear, however, that the big nations kept themselves fully engaged in the achievement of their selfish interests, and bothered not the least about taking any step to amend the wrong done to China. The main reason for the failure of the League of Nations lies in the fact that no big nation was prepared to endanger its trade by following a policy of economic sanctions against Japan, as the world-wide economic crisis had made it essential for them to secure their trade.

**End of Democracy in Germany.** In the elections to the National Assembly in September 1930, Hitler's Nazi Party secured 170 seats, whereas in the previous elections (in May 1928) it had secured only 12 seats. In November 1932, it secured 196 seats and thus became the largest single political party of the National Assembly. In January 1933, Hitler became Chancellor, and soon after the unquestioned ruler of Germany and arbiter of the fate of millions. How could all this be possible? The main reason is that the roots of democracy were never deep among in Germans. The German people had never experienced a share in administration, and when it got power it could not correctly use it. In this experiment in democracy, the Allied nations did not help it at all. They always viewed it with suspicion, and France specially placed obstacles in its path at every step. The period from 1925 to 1930 was comparatively a period of peace and prosperity, but democracy was born in Germany at a time of national defeat and degradation. And all the political parties opposed to democracy viewed it with

contempt Democracy was established in a period of economic crises and it could never get rid of it The War and the defeat had already made the country lifeless. And, over and above this, a huge debt-burden was imposed Unemployment was on the increase<sup>1</sup> All these factors combined to help the slipping out of power from the hands of the Socialists, and the masses developed faith in extremist nationalism. When Luther became Chancellor in 1925, the nationalists were for the first time taken in the Cabinet Further, there was no solid base behind Germany's economic reconstruction. It could not therefore, stand the shock of the world-wide economic crisis of 1929-30 With the stoppage of the payment of foreign loans, prices fell disastrously, and it now affected the policies of the country The Socialist Party went into the background and the influence of the Nazis increased at a rapid pace For a short time power came in the hands of the minority party of Dr Brüning But, as the economic crisis deepened, the influence of Nazis increases. The Nazis, however, had till now not reached a stage where they could capture the administrative machinery by constitutional means Hitler now increased his contacts with military leaders and succeeded in getting the support of Hindenburg Brüning attempted to improve the condition of the country, but he could achieve no notable success. Hitler did not rely only upon his political influence He had also organised a semi-military detachment and this used to have conflict every now and then with the forces of the State. In the election of 1932, the Nazi Party secured 230 seats With a view to have total power in his hands, Hitler dismissed the National Assembly and ordered fresh election In the meantime occurred the incident of the burning of the Reichstag. By laying the charge of this burning on the heads of the communists, Hitler won the sympathy of the whole nation The communists were crushed, and in the new election the Nazis secured a majority. Germany's democratic constitution was cast away in the waste-paper basket and the National Assembly was dismissed for an unspecified period. Now the entire political power centred in the powerful hands of Hitler

**Italy's Foreign Policy** After 1933, Russia had begun to follow a policy of co-operation with democratic countries, and Italy had been isolated. Its relation with Germany had not

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1 See Mildred S Wertheimer *The Financial Crisis in Germany*. (Foreign Policy Reports, Vol 7, No. 26, March 2, 1932)

become specially sweet. The experiment of Nazism was new and uncertain. To enter into friendship with Germany would have meant alienating both France and England, and up till now Italy had not reached a position so as to meet the joint opposition of England, France and Russia. In the absence of might, it took recourse to diplomatic methods. The proposal of a pact between four big nations was clearly an attempt in the direction of making the League of Nations redundant. Britain's Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald, was almost caught in this net spread by Italy. But, on account of a sudden change in France's policy, it could not be implemented. By a Friendship Pact with Russia on September 2, 1933, Mussolini attempted to isolate France from Russia, but in this he failed. Then he diverted his entire attention to France. The differences between Italy and France were deep and fundamental. The claims of Yugoslavia against Italy, the position of Italian nationals in Tunisia, the attempts of Italy to achieve naval power on a par with France, Italy's desire to revise the Versailles Treaty, the differences between the approach of Italy and France towards small nations of Central and South-East Europe—all these questions deeply divided Italy and France. In its policy towards Central and South-East Europe, Italy was proceeding in co-operation with Austria and Hungary, as a result of which the influence of France had weakened. It appears that France made no effort to re-establish its hegemony. The small nations began to independently build their organisations. On February 15, 1933, there was a Pact between Yugoslavia and Rumania, in September a treaty of mutual assurance was signed between Greece and Turkey, on February 4, 1934, another pact was signed between the Balkan countries at Athens and in October and November a constitution was drafted. Till such time as the foreign policy of France was controlled by Bardeau, France retained the control of these organisations in its hands. But after his murder, France adopted a policy of co-operation with Italy.

The main factor which brought France and Italy together is to be traced to the ambition of Germany towards Austria. The murder of Yugoslav King Alexander on October 9, 1934 on French soil brought in chances of France and Italy falling apart. But France now had arrived at a firm decision of following a policy of friendship with Italy. On January 7, 1935, France and Italy entered into a comprehensive

Pact, whereunder the problems that had arisen with regard to East Africa and Tunisia were solved, it was decided that with regard to other matters, a policy of negotiations and co-operation would be followed. Ideas were also exchanged on a scheme for fixing a stable boundary in East Europe. On February 3, 1935, a joint declaration of Britain and France was issued from London in which the proposals accepted at Rome were supported. The Pact between France and Italy acted detrimentally to the movement for the organisation of small nations. Czechoslovakia was faced with the danger that if Germany occupied Austria, it would be completely surrounded. From this point of view, it welcomed the co-operation between France and Italy. As against this, Yugoslavia and Rumania entertained the fears that if France did not support them, they would not be able to defend themselves against Italy and Hungary. Further, France's co-operation with Italy resulted in a deterioration of its relations with England. Britain and Italy were already rivals in the Mediterranean and their interests were never common. Britain was now looking forward to co-operation with Germany against Italy, and France with Italy against Germany.

**Aggression against Abyssinia.** Thus, Italian diplomacy had succeeded in isolating France from the Soviet Union, preventing it from assuming the leadership of smaller nations and in drawing a wedge between France and Great Britain; and now the time had arrived when it could launch upon its schemes for creating an empire in Africa. A plan for an all-out attack against Abyssinia was being given shape since a long time. In January 1935, Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia, had drawn the attention of the League of Nations, but France, which was becoming increasingly friendly with Italy, had succeeded in making the League ineffective on the question. Britain also showed no signs of any action in this regard. On June 18, 1935, the Maffey Report, prepared by an employee of the Colonial Department, was published, which made it abundantly clear that in case Italy attacked Abyssinia and occupied it, Britain would not place any obstruction in its path and would itself try to occupy the Tana Lake and the areas surrounding it, and would also attempt to readjust its boundaries in Somaliland, Kenya and Sudan. On June 24, 1935, when Italy's preparation had fairly advanced, Britain proposed that if Abyssinia ceded certain territory to Italy,

the latter would be prepared to return certain areas in Somaliland On August 15, Britain and France advanced some other suggestions to Italy for the solution of the Abyssinian problem but Mussolini did not consider it worth-while to give any attention to it By September the British attitude seemed to stiffen, but it left no impression upon Italy Now Italian armies were marching swiftly towards Abyssinia.

In the meantime this question had come up before the League of Nations. On October 7, the League unanimously decided that Italy had broken its treaties and pledges and it had become essential to take action against it On the recommendation of a sub-committee, the League Council decided to impose economic sanctions against Italy But, funnily enough, these sanctions were made effective only for those goods which Italy did not need And, instead of being imposed immediately, as laid down in the Constitution of the League, they were made effective on November 19 The only result of all this was that Italy could no more retain confidence in France and Britain, and got the inspiration to tap Germany for future co-operation No restriction was placed on the export of petrol to Italy, even when it was apparent that short of a declaration of war against Italy, the only other thing which could deter it from aggression was to stop the route of Suez Canal or prevent the export of petrol to it In point of fact, Britain and France were not at all keen to place any embargo against Italy. The attitude of France was evident from the very beginning Britain was afraid that in case the Abyssinian armies succeeded in throwing out the Italian armies from its territory, the 'Black Nationalism' of Africa would receive great encouragement and present a danger for its own imperialism on the Continent.<sup>1</sup> In December, Laval and Hoare had discussions in Paris and together they presented a Peace Plan, which advocated the transfer of a very big portion of Abyssinia to Italy, as also complete economic control over another huge area When this Plan was published, British public opinion expressed such intense resentment that the Baldwin Govt. could save itself only by removing Sir Samuel Hoare from the Ministry, further, it had to give the specific assurance that these proposals were now "given up totally and for ever and

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<sup>1</sup> Smuts used to say, "In case there is a conflict on the borders of British Colonies in Africa, it is bound to have severe repercussions within the British Colonies."

this Government will never make any effort to bring it to the fore" But actually there was no change in the direction of Britain's policy and Italian armies continuously marched on to victory When Ethiopian freedom was thus being crushed under the jackboots of a powerful imperialism, the independent soul of Haile Selassie cried out to the world: "Do the people of the world not yet realise that by fighting to the bitter end, I am not only fulfilling my sacred duties to my people, but also attempting to defend the last fort of collective security? Are they so blind as not to realise that I am fulfilling my duty to the entire humanity? I will continue to fight till my lazy Comrades do not come to this realisation. And if they do not ever come to our help, then I will prophecy without the least bitterness that the Western World is doomed" This painful appeal did have a resonance within the walls of the League of Nations. After the fall of Addis Ababa, Haile Selassie fled away from Ethiopia On May 10, 1936, he again appealed to the League of Nations from his camp at Jerusalem in the sacred name of the principle of collective security and international obligation "not to recognise Italian victory over Ethiopia." On May 11, the League Council held a meeting, but postponed any decision till June 16. In the meantime, on June 10, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer characterised the economic sanction as "the zenith of madness," and declared that they were no more necessary. On 18th June, Eden declared that Britain had decided to lift the economic sanctions<sup>1</sup> From June 30th to 4th July, the General Body of the League of Nations met. Haile Selassie warned Europe against that tragedy which was soon to engulf it Litvinov appealed to the League to take a firm step Other nations also advanced this view that if the Italian conquest of Abyssinia was recognised "all hopes of international confidence and world peace would be demolished for many generations to come" Despite this, however, the economic sanctions imposed by the League were decided to be withdrawn Two years after, speaking before the League Council, Haile Selassie said "On the demand of the aggressor, all methods and ways have been used to expel Ethiopia

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1 In his speech on June 25, 1939, Laval said, "The economic sanctions were imposed because we did not want to break with Britain and the League of Nations, and they were implemented in moderation because we did not want to annoy Italy".

from the League of Nations . . Will law triumph against brute force? Or will brute force triumph against law? . . Many nations have left Ethiopia in the lurch because of the fear and threat of the aggressor, and because of their weakness. They have exhibited feelings of fear and rout. Every nation keeps its own interests in mind. It is certain that they will also be left to their fate in the same manner as Ethiopia has been left to its fate. There are different ways for the defence of peace. One way is to defend peace on the basis of justice, and the other is to have peace at any price. The League of Nations will be committing suicide if it leaves the path of achieving peace based on justice, for which purpose it was specifically created, and takes recourse to achieve peace at any price, and for that even agrees to sacrifice one of its members to the whims of an aggressor." The consequence of the encouragement of Italian Imperialism was that another great nation of Central Europe, full of new and high ambitions, started its march towards imperialistic conquests with greater vigour, and the war which Britain and France wanted to avoid even at the cost of their self-respect, perforce came upon them.

**Fortification of Rhineland.** The Abyssinian campaign of Italy not only exposed the hollowness of the League, it also made it abundantly clear that Britain and France could not be expected to oppose any aggressive designs. The mutual relations of France and Britain were not very happy. The Naval agreement between Britain and Germany on June 18, 1936, which in effect went against the Anglo-French agreement of January 1935, further worsened their relations, but it very much strengthened the naval power of Germany. Italy, on the other hand, was dissatisfied because it did not get from France and Britain the co-operation it expected on the question of Abyssinia. The general elections were due in France and it was expected that as a result of it the internal differences and bitterness in the country would be very much intensified. Hitler regarded it as a very opportune moment. On March 7, 1936, against the express agreements at Versailles and Locarno, the German armies entered those territories of Rhineland where it had promised not to keep any army, and Germany started constructing fortifications. In a way it was a complementary step following the Anglo-German agreement, and its object was to separate Eastern Europe from its

Western part The construction of powerful fortifications on the borders of Rhineland meant that France could not go to the aid of Poland and other South-East European countries. As *Time and Tide* wrote in a leading article, Germany had succeeded in cutting Europe in half Just a week before sending armies to Rhineland, Hitler had declared that it was madness to think of war between Germany and France, and, unashamedly, after the occupation of Rhineland, he invited those nations to sign another non-aggression pact, even though he had just torn to bits the one he had signed just a short while ago The German military occupation of Rhineland had different reactions in different countries. Poland and Czechoslovakia were directly affected and expressed their desire for military action if Britain and France were prepared to co-operate with them. But no such eagerness was visible in England and France. The danger to France had undoubtedly increased, but in the eyes of Britain was not an event of much importance. Britain had always felt that one day or the other Germany was bound to militarise the area. In the eyes of Britain, Germany might have broken international law by the militarisation of Rhineland, but it was not such a step as to invite a world war

**The Civil War in Spain.** After the Abyssinian War, Italy left its association with Britain and France and established closer links with Germany The quarrel between Italy and Germany was actually on account of Austria. In July 1936 a new treaty between Austria and Germany was published in which Germany fully recognised the sovereignty of Austria. The publication of this treaty created the proper atmosphere for a mutual treaty between Italy and Germany in the coming November In July, the civil war had started in Spain A democratic regime had been established in Spain in 1931 but democratic organisations could never be worked there properly Internal revolts—sometimes from one side and sometimes from the other—used to be a regular feature of the country In the elections of 1933, the Conservative Party had a majority but in the 1936 elections, the Conservative as well as the Progressive Parties were evenly balanced, and when the Progressives attempted to take the responsibility of the Government in their hands, the Conservatives under the leadership of Franco declared civil war. The Governments of Britain and France appealed to the governments of all



European countries not to interfere in the internal matters of Spain, and in September 1936 an international treaty was signed in London with a view to achieving this objective. All the countries promised not to interfere in Spain's internal affairs, but no country in actual practice followed this promise. Italy was supporting Franco from the very beginning, and it is very clear that if Italy has not supported Franco, his revolt would have been crushed at its very inception. As soon as the Civil War began, Germany also started to help Franco. After some days Soviet Russia began to give aid to the other side of the Civil War. Some volunteers reached Spain to fight on the side of the popular government. It is clear that if Italy, Germany and Russia had not taken interest in the Spanish Civil War it could have ended very soon. Some writers are of the opinion that these countries were taking interest in the Spanish Civil War in order to support their political ideologies, but actually they were merely attempting to strengthen themselves in order to be better prepared for a possible war in Europe. The object of Hitler was to complete the encirclement of France. The object of befriending Spain was that in the event of war, France would be obliged to devote attention to its southern frontier with Spain. In the eyes of Italy, its friendship with Spain could enable it to keep in control Britain's naval power in the Mediterranean. And because Italy and Germany were supporting France it became essential for Russia to support the other side. The most important consequence of the Spanish War was that Germany and Italy came closer to each other, and a still better atmosphere was created for the final *anschluss* of Germany with Austria.<sup>1</sup>

**Rape of Austria.** In February 1938, Hitler called Chancellor Schuschnigg of Austria to his residence at Berchtesgaden and forced him to appoint the Nazi leader Seyss-Inquart as his Home Minister. This was against the 1931 Treaty between Austria and Germany in which Germany had assured that it would not interfere in the internal affairs of Austria and on the basis of which Italy had agreed to establish closer links with Germany. The Chamberlain Government utilised this opportunity to isolate Italy from

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<sup>1</sup> See Charles A. Thomson · *Spain Civil War* (Foreign Policy Reports, Part II, No 21).

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Germany and gave it the assurance that its victory over Abyssinia would be recognised, and Britain would always be prepared in future to maintain friendly relations with Italy. In protest against this policy of appeasement of Italy, Eden resigned his portfolio of Foreign Secretaryship of the British Cabinet. There was, however, no fundamental change in the policy of the Chamberlain Government. An agreement was signed between Britain and Italy but it did not have any political consequences. After the appointment of Seyss Inquart as the Home Minister of Austria, the trouble created by the Austrian Nazis increased and it became impossible for Schuschnigg to maintain peace and order. On 9th March, Schuschnigg ordered a plebiscite and wanted the people to declare whether they believed in the maintenance of Austrian freedom or not. He expected a huge majority in his favour but Hitler stubbornly demanded the postponement of the plebiscite. At the same time, he called upon Schuschnigg to submit his resignation and insisted that two-thirds of the Austrian Cabinet should be comprised of Nazis. Simultaneously German army units moved into Austria, and the German newspapers began to publish horror stories about the torture of Austrian Nazis at the hands of the Austrian Government. Schuschnigg denied these allegations of torture, postponed the plebiscite and resigned. On March 12 German armies entered Austria. Schuschnigg and his colleagues and thousands of leading citizens of Austria were arrested, and without firing a single shot the *anschluss* of Austria and Germany was declared.

**The Dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.** Austin Chamberlain had warned long ago "Austrian independence is very important. If Austria falls, then Czechoslovakia cannot be defended, and after that the Balkans would be compelled to bow down before a giant power." Churchill also declared in the Parliament "German mastery of Vienna opens before the Nazis all the roads to South East Europe, the rivers and the rail routes, and all other means of communications, and gives it total military and economic control." By his occupation of Austria, Hitler now surrounded Czechoslovakia on three sides. In a big area of Czechoslovakia, in Bohemia, 3.2 million Sudeten Germans were living. Their sympathies were with Germany. This area was mainly industrial. In the 1929-32 economic crisis its situation had very much deterio-

rated, while agricultural citizens of the eastern provinces were in a better condition. With the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany, a Sudeten German political party had become powerful in Czechoslovakia. As the Czechoslovak authorities in Prague increased their contacts with Russia, so also the dissatisfaction among the Sudeten Germans increased, and they began to look to Hitler for help. After the *anschluss* with Austria it became easier for Hitler to attack Czechoslovakia. Undoubtedly Czechoslovakia had treaties of mutual aid with France and Russia. Britain had an attitude of sympathy. On March 22, 1938, i.e. 11 days after Hitler's attack on Austria, the London *Times* suggested that a plebiscite be taken of the citizens of the Sudeten area to find out as to whether they want to remain in Czechoslovakia or to have an independent government of their own. On 24th April 1938, Henalin in his famous Karlsbad address raised the demands of the Sudeten German Party. In this he demanded self-government for all those territories where the Sudeten Germans were in a majority, and the Government of Prague was asked to break off its relations with France and to establish close political and economic co-operation with Germany. It was only natural for the Masaryk Government to reject these demands, but after that Germany intensified its propaganda and a German army began to collect on the Czechoslovak border.

Czechoslovakia began its preparations to meet the challenge. France promised it assistance and it was expected that in case France was prepared for war, Russia would help it. Under these circumstances Britain sent its representative, Lord Runciman, for arbitration. On July 7, at the request of Czechoslovakian Government, the Sudetan German Party declared its programme of 14 points in which it was demanded that all democratic and representative organisations of the country be dissolved and the country be divided into five parts. On September 12, in his famous Nuremberg address, Hitler publicly declared his support for the minority Sudetens of Czechoslovakia. On 14th September, Henalin demanded the immediate dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. At the same time concentration of German armies on Czechoslovakian borders increased. War seemed imminent, when on September 15, Chamberlain met Hitler at Berchtesgaden. In this meeting, it is assumed, Hitler demanded that all the territories of Czechoslovakia where the

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Germans were in a majority, should be joined with Germany. Chamberlain got France to support this proposal and Czechoslovakia was forced to accept it. On September 23, Chamberlain again met Hitler at Gettysburg but he was surprised to find that in the meantime, Hitler had increased his demands. Czechoslovakia rejected these demands and France and Britain assured it of its help but this decision apparently did not stand for any length of time.

**Appeasement at Munich** Under the circumstances, Mussolini took upon himself the responsibility to carry on the negotiations. With the consent of Hitler, he advanced the proposal for a meeting of four Big Powers at Munich on September 29. Chamberlain was then speaking in the House of Commons. The Munich Conference lasted for less than eight hours. On September 29, at Munich, an agreement was signed<sup>1</sup>. As a result of this Treaty, Germany was authorised to occupy four border provinces of Czechoslovakia within the next few days and the Czechoslovakian Government was forced to release all the Sudeten political prisoners. The strange feature of this Munich Conference was that not a single representative of Czechoslovakia participated in it, and Russia also was not invited there. As a result, without its consent, Czechoslovakia was forced to cede 1/5th part of its territory, which had the biggest fortifications and which had the centres of all important industries. According to Harrold Nicholson, by this process Germany got 15 per cent of Czechoslovakia's glass industry, 59 per cent of its textile industry, 33 per cent of its industrial population and 14 out of its 27 big cities. Immediately after, Czechoslovakia had to cede the entire area of Teschen to Poland and the southern part of Slovakia and the central part of Luthenia to Hungary. The Slovaks were also given complete right of self-determination. Thus, the Munich

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1 The best account of the Munich Pact will be found in H.F.R. Strong's book *When there is no Peace*. For a criticism of the British policy at the time see Winston Churchill's book *While England Slept* (collection of his speeches between 1932 and 1938) and also *Step by Step* (collection of a series of articles begun in 1936). In his book *Munich—before and after*, W. H. Hadley has supported Chamberlain's policy. Andrew Worth's *France and Munich* throws light on French policy. Also see V.M. Dean's *Diplomatic Background of Munich Accord* ("Foreign Policy Reports", Part XXIV, No. 20), G.F. Elliott *The Military Consequences of Munich* ("Foreign Policy Reports", Part XXIV, No. 20, December 15, 1938).

Pact was a great victory for Hitler's tactics and at the same time it removed all obstructions in Germany's march towards Eastern Europe. The Skoda Works, the biggest armament industry of Europe, a powerful and well-trained army and a strong air force, were all reduced to nought by one successful diplomatic move. The policy at Munich, also the policy followed by Britain and France before Munich had been called in history as the policy of appeasement and has been severely criticised. It is undoubted that it was a policy of weakness, but behind it was the faith that Hitler was determined to have in Germany all areas where the Germans were in a majority and he could not be prevented from this objective, except by war, and they wanted to postpone war at any cost. It is obvious that they committed a blunder in evaluating Germany's ultimate objectives. This mistake of theirs was further made clear when in March 1939 Hitler brought into his possession the remaining portion of Czechoslovakia and advanced his claims further.

**Beginning of 1939.** The year 1939 was full of various hopes and expectations in Britain. In his New Year Message, Chamberlain called his critics pessimists and said that a year before, "No one could have dared to prophesy that four great nations of Europe would have advanced so far along the road to conciliation." But the fears of Churchill and the warnings of *Izvestia* proved more correct. The new year had not far advanced when the rising ambitions of Nazi Germany again became apparent. On March 15, Hitler called on the old President and the Foreign Secretary of whatever remained of the Czechoslovakian country, and forced them to give the remaining portion of Slovakia to Germany. Thus Czechoslovakia was effaced from the map of Europe. But this event had a profound impact upon the democratic countries, especially Britain. Sharp and Kirk write "In spite of repeated blows upon the Versailles system by Hitler, the British Cabinet had remained firm in its belief that German ambitions did not extend beyond the goal of rectifying some of the most distasteful features of the settlement, and that when this had been done, effective collaboration could be established with the Reich. They also had faith in the oft-repeated declarations of Hitler that he never wished that non-Germans should be brought under the rule of Swastika." A wave of anger spread over England. On March 17, in a speech at Birmingham, Cham-

berlain sorrowfully asked: "Is it the last attack upon a small State or is it to be followed by others? Is it a step to establish world domination through brute force?" After a fortnight he declared in the House of Commons. "If I get the conviction that a nation has decided to establish domination over the world through force then I believe that it becomes necessary to resist it." It was clear that Britain was leaving the policy of appeasement and was advancing its step in another direction. The assurance given to Poland on March 31, which was called "immediate and fundamental", was an indicator of the coming change in British foreign policy. Speaking in Parliament the Prime Minister of Britain said "In the event of an action which threatens the freedom of Poland and which the Polish government considers essential to resist with its armies, the British Government will be compelled to give all aid to Poland" France also gave a similar assurance to Poland. Similar assurances were given to Rumania, and Turkey. Negotiations were started with Russia. On April 26, reservists were called up in England. In the new Budget of 1939-40, the expenditure on army was very much increased. In the meantime on March 21, Hitler took Memel, and demanded of Poland to sign a treaty against Russia, but Poland rejected it.

Actually there were deep reasons for differences between Germany and Poland which could not be easily removed. Germany could not be expected to cease its efforts to get back Danzig and the Polish Corridor, which divided it from Eastern Prussia as also the valuable mines of Upper Silesia, which together comprised a population of 8 lakh Germans. After the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, Germany's claws had advanced hundred miles eastwards to Carpathia. Now it had surrounded Poland from three sides. In the end of March, Germany demanded of Poland to immediately return Danzig, and to give it a passage in the Polish Corridor so that it could establish its connection with East Prussia through rail and road. In return for this Germany made extravagant promises to Poland. Poland rejected these demands. As a counterblast Hitler announced abrogation of Polish-German treaty of April 26, 1934. On May 22, Ribbentrop and Count Ciano met in Berlin, and they together signed a treaty of defence and mutual aid between Italy and Germany. In the early weeks of summer German armies and war materials were continuously despatched to Danzig. In the coming months pressure of Germany over

Poland persistently increased and German papers launched a ferocious attack upon Poland. All the allegations about the oppression and terrorisation of Germans which were made against Czechoslovakia were repeated.

If danger to Poland had increased as a result of the German policy, the danger to Russia was no less. After the incorporation of Slovakia in Germany, German borders were very near Carpathia, which was a part of Russian Ukraine. After Czechoslovakia, Memel was occupied. This became a cause of great worry to Russia.

In 1915, German armies had marched against Russia through this very route,—through Carpathia in the south and Lithuania in the north. Whether Germany had intentions of repeating this military manoeuvre or not it was definite that with the encirclement of Poland Russia could no more consider itself safe. In point of fact England and France could not give any effective aid to Poland without the co-operation of Russia. Unfortunately, however, differences of ideologies between these countries had generated in them a feeling of mutual distrust. Therefore, attempts to establish any co-operation between them moved with a very slow speed. Britain had given assurances to Poland. But, in the next five months, between April and August, it had hardly taken any step to implement it. Britain could not afford to supply arms to Poland, nor could it give enough loan to Poland to purchase arms from America. There were very little military talks, and even they were indecisive.

Even less wisdom was shown from the diplomatic point of view. It was certain that England and France could never defend Poland without the help of Russia, and time and again Russia expressed its desire for co-operation and placed a number of proposals before the Western democracies. They however, always viewed it with suspicion.<sup>1</sup>

On April 15, after drawing lessons from the events in the last week of March, England proposed to Russia that it should give an assurance of aid both to Poland and Rumania with

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1. In March 1938, after the *anschluss* of Germany with Austria Litvinov proposed that a conference of big nations to preserve peace should be immediately called. England rejected the proposal. In March 1939 he again suggested a conference of six nations at Bucharest. But this proposal also was rejected as immature.

whom Russia had very bad relations. In its reply Russia suggested that Britain, France and Russia should jointly assure all the countries from the Baltic to Black Sea. Negotiations proceeded at a very slow speed for a very long time.

Till the very end Britain was not prepared to give assurances to any other country except Poland and Rumania<sup>1</sup>. This strengthened Russian fears that Britain's object was to encourage Germany to attack the Soviet Union through the Baltic countries. In the beginning of May an important event occurred in Russia. The Foreign portfolio was taken away from Litvinov, who had been following a policy of co-operation with democratic countries for a number of years, and was given to Molotov who was supposed to have definite leanings towards Germany. It appears that even these developments did not teach any thing to England and France.

In the meantime diplomatic talks continued with Russia. The Labour Party suggested that Lord Halifax should be sent for this work. It appears that the inspiration for this proposal came from Russia. But this proposal was not accepted, and an official of the Foreign Department, William Strang, was sent to Moscow. Strang was an able man but was given no powers. For everything he had to consult his Government at each step. In the middle of August negotiations were started at a military level. This time again some second-rate army officers were sent to Russia. Russia said "We expected Gamelin and Gort, but you have sent such people who cannot talk on a level of equality with Voroshilov". Negotiations nevertheless continued. Russia suggested that in the event of a German attack, it will send its armies to Vilna in the North and Lvov in the South so that they could meet the German armies. Poland, which had as much distrust of Moscow as of the Germans, refused to accept it. On August 20, when Voroshilov heard this he got so angry that he walked out of the room. On August 22, when Poland was made to agree to this proposal, the ambassadors of France and

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1. Hugh Dalton writes: "During the next five months no plans were prepared. Poland on its part gave the assurance for mutual aid, but this did not help advance the negotiations. A financial mission came to London from Poland but it could get no loan. We told the Poles that we ourselves wanted all the arms that we have and we could give them any. Then they expressed their wish to purchase aeroplanes and other arms from America. But we did not give them any loan. There were absolutely no effective Staff talks."



Britain went to see Molotov with this good news. He laughed wryly and in a stammering voice said that the next day Ribbentrop was expected in Moscow in order to sign a defensive treaty between Russia and Germany.

The agreement signed between Germany and Russia on August 23, was an event of great surprise for the whole world as every one expected that in the end the democratic countries and Russia would come to an agreement. Some people say that this pact is an indication of the evilness of the Communist Russia. But the fact is that Russia had been convinced that the democratic countries had no desire to co-operate with it. On the other hand, Hitler did not want to fight a war on two fronts. When he saw that the Western nations were determined to call a halt to his aggressive designs, he made an effort to improve his relations with Russia. This agreement is not an indication of Russia's cunningness but is a practical step taken by it to ensure its defence. This agreement, however, neither altered the basic objectives of Germany, nor did it mean any change in the fundamental policy of Russia. Looking at the halting and vacillating policies of the West, if Russia had rejected German advances for friendship, it would have invited disaster. After signing a temporary treaty with Germany, Russia now got opportunity to strengthen its defences.

The last days of peace are like the end of a tragic drama and it can be briefly narrated. Immediately after this treaty was signed, the British Government announced that it would not affect its responsibilities towards Poland. Its difficulties had nevertheless very much increased. On August 28, the British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Neville Henderson, suggested that direct negotiation should be started between Germany and Poland. Poland refused to accept the proposal. On the evening of August 30, when Henderson met Ribbentrop again, the latter read out very fast a long memorandum in German. When Henderson wanted a copy of the same in order to forward it to the Polish Government Ribbentrop replied that there was no time left for it. Before beginning the Second World War Hitler made a dramatic and 'liberal' announcement to the effect that after solving the Polish problem he would be prepared to "guarantee the existence of the British empire". But events were now moving fast. On the morning of September 1, 1939, German armies crossed the Polish border, and

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on September 3, at 11.15 hours, the British Prime Minister informed the British people that war had been declared against Germany.<sup>1</sup>

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1. In order to study the last days before the outbreak of World War II, see G J Hains and R J S Hoffman *Origin and Background of Second World War*, Henderson, *Failure of a Mission*, F L Schuman, *Design for Power, Struggle for the World*, Documents governing the German Polish relations and the outbreak of hostilities between Great Britain and Germany on September 3, 1939, (Official Publication of Britain, No. 6106).

## II

### THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND AFTER

**The end of Poland.** Within three weeks of the outbreak of the War, Poland was defeated<sup>1</sup> On September 27th at Warsaw, the resistance power of the Poles was crushed by the German army, but before that Russia had attacked eastern Poland. After the Polish strength had been undermined, it became very easy for Russia to march through Poland. Simultaneously with its victory Russia established Communism in these countries. The large landed estates were distributed among the peasants and the poorest tenant got the most preferential treatment. Local soviets were established, and with the Russian aid, construction of roads and canals was undertaken with great speed. Eastern Poland was made a part of the Soviet Union<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to say whether this action was taken in accordance with certain previous agreements with Germany or without any prior agreement. On September 28, Germany and Russia signed a special Treaty according to which Poland was divided almost equally by a line drawn through Warsaw On October 8, the Polish Corridor and Silesia were incorporated in Germany, and only an area of 40,000 sq miles in central Poland, not included in either German or Russian territory, was left. The policy of Sovietisation was also followed in Polish Ukraine.

**The Foreign Policy of Russia.** In studying the Polish War, it is of the utmost importance to keep the Soviet policy in mind The Red Armies marched in southern Ukraine to a point where it became impossible for Germany to have direct

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1 The attack on Poland proved a very good opportunity for Germany to test its war weapons In this campaign Germany used 73 divisions, more than 2,000 aeroplanes and 6,000 tanks and attacked Poland from the north, south and the east at the same time See C. Hollingsmuth: *The Three Weeks' War in Poland*

2 See Bernard Paras. *A History of Russia.*

contact with the borders of Hungary and Rumania. It was clear that Russia did not want that the path to the Baltic Sea and the Russian Ukraine should be left open for Germany. Thus a great obstacle was put in the way of German ambitions to march towards South-East Europe. Actually, behind the facade of Russo-German friendship was self-interest and diplomacy and the fundamental distrust between these two was never reduced. It was apparent from the very early period of the War that Russia was making all-out efforts to strengthen its frontiers. Hitler was forced to come to a Treaty with Russia and for this he had to pay a very heavy price.

After strengthening the Hungarian and Rumanian borders in the south-west, Russia now diverted its attention towards the Baltic States. The reason for this also was that it wanted to strengthen its border defences in proper time, not that it had launched on a new policy of imperialism. Russia has always been alert to a possible attack upon it via Luthania. The object of Stalin in advancing towards the Baltic Sea probably was to wash off the shame of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. The main object, however, was to establish Russian authority over the Baltic Sea. On September 28 Estonia was forced to friendship and mutual aid for 10 years with Russia. According to this Treaty Russia got the authority to establish air and naval bases on the shore of Estonia. In the next two weeks the two other Baltic States, Lithuania and Latvia, similarly came under Russian tutelage. Thus, Russia became the complete master of the Baltic and the path of Germany to march towards the east was blocked both in the north and the south. Hitler called back to Germany many of the families who were living in the Baltic provinces for a number of centuries. In the south, Russia advanced towards Rumania which had in its possession since World War I, the province of Bessarabia, formerly belonging to Russia and then it advanced towards Turkey, which had control of the Dardanelles. But here, Russia did not achieve any success. Rumania in the meantime strengthened its relations with Hungary and established close economic links with the Allied nations. Turkey rejected the demands of Russia to close the Baltic Sea for the ships of other nations, and signed a Treaty of mutual co-operation with Britain.

**The Finnish War.** It was as necessary for Russia to have domination over Finland as over the Baltic States, but it was faced with many difficulties. The Finnish armies were within 20 miles of Leningrad. Russia wanted Finland to give air bases just as it got air bases in the Baltic States. Finland, probably on the inspiration of Germany, rejected these demands. On 30th November, Russia attacked Finland. Stalin announced that the present Finnish Government is dissolved and in its place a government headed by an exiled Finnish Communist, Otto Kussinin, was announced. Although the total population of Finland is much less than the population of Leningrad, this small country resisted the giant power Russia with great heroism for many months. The war continued in the freezing winter of December, January and February. At last, Finland had to yield before the great power of Russia, and Russia also had to follow a policy of compromise and conciliation towards the establishment of a new administration in Finland. A Treaty was signed on March 30, 1940, which gave Russia what it wanted, and even more. Some people are of the opinion that the Finnish War indicates the rise of imperialism in Russia but as Barbara Waid says, "The entire object of Russian military action in the winter of 1939-40 was that at a time when its most powerful enemies were engaged elsewhere, it should strengthen itself from a military point of view. From a purely national point of view, Russian attack of Finland can be compared to the occupation of Sudetenland by Hitler. From a military point of view it was as much justified." Till the end of the Finnish War, the foreign policies of Germany and Russia seemed to move on parallel lines. On October 31, 1939, in a speech, Molotov laid the responsibility of the War on the head of England. Actually, in all their public announcements, the Russian leaders protested their friendship with Germany and repudiated all those allegations which had been made against this friendship. Many statements about far-reaching economic co-operation were also made, but in actual fact, no such step was taken which could have established greater friendship between the two countries. The Agreement with Russia gave Hitler the opportunity to postpone his schemes in the east and after getting confident about his eastern borders, he concentrated all his attention on the west.

**Victory over Eastern Europe.** After the fall of Poland which took only three weeks, the War entered a phase of very

propaganda section of the German Government was making constant attempts to draw a wedge between France and England and it achieved sufficient success in this. When the English armies escaped via Dunkirk the French became yet more distrustful of the English. On the other hand, regarding defence of France to be a lost hope, the British did not send any more armies to France. The result was that in the battle of the Soame, where more than 150 German divisions were fighting, only 3 or 4 English divisions fought on the side of France. The German Radio in a biting commentary said: "The British? They know only one war strategy—how to escape with their armies. Very soon you will read in their newspapers the triumphant declarations as to how British naval forces took away the last English soldier without any disorder and bloodshed."

**The Fall of France.** By the beginning of June 1940 the situation had become very serious. France was very much in need of help, but England was not at all in a position to give it. Neither had it any army to send to the Continent, nor had it enough war material by which it could compensate the huge losses at Flanders. On the morning of 13th July, 1940, the German armies reached Paris and the next day they occupied the city. Before the end of this tragedy, Churchill went to France and proposed to its Government to form an Anglo-French Union, but hardly any time was left for such a move. Petain succeeded in the place of Renan on 16th June, and he at once appealed to Germany for armistice. On June 22nd France signed the treaty terms as laid down by Germany as a result of which the entire coast line of France was given over to Germany. France also surrendered to Germany all its arms and ammunitions. The French Army and the Navy were disarmed. Taking advantage of the situation Italy also declared war on France and the Allies on June 10. On June 24 France had to sign a similar treaty of armistice with Italy. A leading military leader of France, Gen. De Gaulle, took refuge in Britain and there he announced the formation of an independent French Government. Britain was afraid that Germany might use the French warships to attack it and so either it took possession of the French warships lying in British harbours or destroyed them. This also had a bad effect upon Anglo-French relations<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See D. Draper *The Six Weeks' War, France, May 10-June 25, 1940*, Andre Maurois. *Why France fell*, H. F. Armstrong *"The Chronology of Failure The last days of the French Republic."*

**The Battle of Britain.** After the fall of France, Hitler was mightily strengthened. Now he was in possession of the entire sea-coast of Europe from Norway to Sweden. Within a few weeks his most ambitious dreams of war had been fulfilled, and so after the fall of France he had no immediate schemes to carry forward his battle with England. Both the countries were fighting each other on the sea. In the early months of the war some of the best British warships were sunk and in retaliation Britain attempted an economic blockade of Germany. Immediately after Churchill became the Prime Minister Britain began all-out efforts to strengthen its defence. Between July and October Britain was continuously bombarded. Every attempt was made to destroy its air bases, its naval dockyards, its food stores, etc. Within the next one year Germany dropped 2 lakh bombs over Britain which killed 33,000 people and wounded 50,000. In London alone more than 10 lakh houses were destroyed and in the rest of Britain 20,000 houses were ruined. The British gave a strong counter-reply. Between August 1940 and June 1941, it destroyed 5,220 German aeroplanes, out of which 66 planes were destroyed in a single day. The informations received later reveal that Hitler was not planning to attack Britain because he expected that very soon the British will surrender, but by its brave resistance the British destroyed these hopes of Hitler.

**The Foreign Policy of Italy.** On June 10th, when French resistance was rapidly collapsing, Italy declared war on France<sup>1</sup>. This was a step full of treachery and absolutely unwarranted. During the previous years relations of Italy with Germany had very much been strengthened. During the Spanish Civil War their armies fought shoulder to shoulder. The basis of German-Italian co-operation was not only political but also psychological, and even from the economic point of view they were near to each other. By the end of 1938 Italy had come to entirely depend upon Germany in its foreign policy, even though it is almost certain that while occupying Austria or on the occasion of the occupation of Sudetenland, Germany did not consider it necessary to consult Italy. Looking at the success achieved by Germany in Eastern Europe by threats, Italy began to believe that

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1. See P. Bodoglio. *Italy in the Second World War, The Ciano's Diaries 1939-43*, B. Mussolini. *Fall of Mussolini. His Own Story*

by following the same tactics it would be able to achieve complete domination in the Mediterranean. In fact Mussolini always dreamt of a Munich in the Mediterranean. But Italy neither had the necessary armed strength nor the economic resources to influence England and France in the Mediterranean as Germany could in Eastern Europe. The dream of a Mediterranean Munich could become true only on the help of Germany. But Germany at this time was busy in occupying Prague, conquering Memel and pressing Poland. It was apparent that it cared the least about its companion.

In September 1939 when War started, Italy did not immediately join it. While one reason for this may be attributed to Italy's weakness, the other reason was that it was necessary in the interests of Germany that Italy remained neutral. Aggression in Ethiopia and the civil war in Spain had so much tired out Italy that it could not even think of war. It had also the fear that in the event of a war France would attack its industrial centres which were near to the French borders and would easily destroy them, and England would block the two ends of the Mediterranean at Gibraltar and the Suez as a result of which 80 per cent of Italy's foreign trade and the whole of Italy's empire would break. Actually it was not at all prepared for a war. But if after the outbreak of the war it remained neutral, it was not because of its inability to enter the war but because of the requirements of Germany. Hitler believed that the Western nations were not prepared to fight a war and immediately after the victory over Poland, when he would announce the peace terms, the Western nations would keep quiet. When, however, Britain and France refused to talk peace even at the end of the Polish campaign, and the war seemed to drag on, even then Germany did not want Italy to enter the War because in that event it could be attacked from several directions. In that event Germany would be forced to rush to Italy's rescue. By remaining neutral Italy could be more useful by breaking the economic blockade of Germany. Gradually it became clear that if the Allied nations did not stiffen their economic blockade, and if the Balkan countries remained peaceful, Germany could face this blockade for an unlimited period. From this point of view also Italy's neutrality was essential. During the winter of 1939-40 Italy did very useful work in breaking Britain's economic blockade of Germany and maintaining the contacts of Germany with various markets of the world.



**Change in Attitude.** In the meantime many internal changes were taking place in Italy. The influence of Nazi and Fascist organisations was increasing. The Government was busy amassing war weapons and materials and this was affecting the standard of living of the people. On the other hand, German propaganda was also influencing Italy, and the feeling was gaining ground that England and France were resisting justifiable demands of the Germans for a *Lebensraum*, and on the other they were crushing the ambitions of Italy by holding it within their seas. The result of all this was that a feeling of hatred and anger developed in Italy against democratic countries. People became inclined towards war. In the spring of 1940, when the Allied nations stiffened their economic blockade and Germany was conquering one country after another, the whole aspect of war had changed. The war shifted now from the economic to the military field, and it became essential to take a decision as soon as possible. From this point of view, the utility of an Italian attack on the southern borders of France could be that the Allied nations would be forced to give considerable attention to the Mediterranean area. German *blitzkrieg* in Europe convinced Italy that war would end very soon. It was also now better prepared for a war. It became now impossible for Mussolini to control himself. On June 10, he declared war against France and Britain. France prayed for armistice. Italy had the satisfaction that it could achieve its dream with such ease.

**Disappointments of Italy.** As, however, time advanced disappointments to Italy increased. It was not at all prepared for a big war. In the economic field it was even less prepared. There was no internal discipline. Mussolini was probably thinking that after the fall of France Britain would accept defeat and the war would end. Actually Italy joined the war not to fight but to share the fruits of victory. If this was not the case it is difficult to understand why in the beginning of July when all the friends of Britain had been defeated and Britain had hardly any force in the Mediterranean and Egypt, Italy did not press upon Suez. England had very little force in the Mediterranean. In Malta, Gibraltar and Egypt it hardly had 250 old type aeroplanes, and 2 naval fleets at Alexandria and Malta. Italy had 10 big battleships and a fleet of many

cruisers, 500 aeroplanes and 2 lakh soldiers in Libya. In September, probably on the inspiration of Germany, Marshal Graziani advanced towards Egypt, but could not go beyond Siddi Barrani. In the meantime France had fallen. While Germany had occupied 2/3rd of its territory, Italy had got nothing. Its dreams of Corsica, Tunisia and Nice were still unfulfilled.

Italy attacked Greece in October. It is difficult to understand the reasons for it. Probably Italy feared that Germany might occupy the entire Balkans. This did not, however, result in any good for Italy. Within a month the last soldier of Italy was expelled from Greece and the Greek armies were advancing on the entire front towards Albania. Soon after this Britain's naval fleet attacked Taranto. Italy's fleet was most severely mauled. On December 7, British armies attacked Siddi Barrani, and in a bitter battle for two months, General Wavell not only expelled Graziani's armies from Egypt but forced him to evacuate the entire province of Cyrenaica. In the meantime Britain's air arm was attacking Italy's armies in Libya and the Mediterranean. 1,37,000 Italian soldiers were taken prisoner, and 1,300 big guns and a huge amount of other war material fell into the hands of the British. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that Marshal Badoglio resigned and there were rumours of a strong discontent and even revolt in the army. Germany immediately came to the rescue of its ally. German war planes replaced Italian planes in Sicily and other areas. German soldiers reached Africa, and the armed intervention of Germany in the Balkans washed away the shame of Italy's defeat in Albania. In the Middle East also, after the accession to power of pro-Nazi Governments in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Iran, the position of Britain became precarious, and it feared that Germany would attack its oil pipe-lines and also the Suez. To obviate this possibility the British removed the Iraq administration by force and established a Government at Baghdad which was entirely dependent upon them. Similar changes were brought about in the administration of Lebanon, Syria. In Iran also a forcible change in the Government was brought about. From the point of view of the defence of the empire, this was a major step, because there is no doubt that if Germany had got possession of these important Middle East territories, the Fascist forces would have been very much strengthened in their challenge to the British and the French empires.

**Changes in Soviet Foreign Policy.** Events in the latter half of 1940—fall of Norway, Holland, Belgium, and above all, France—brought about great changes in the policies of the nations involved in the war. These events, and the entry of Italy into the war on the side of Germany presented great dangers for Russia. Russia hoped that the war between the Fascist Powers and the democratic countries would drag on for a long time. But the fall of all the western nations except England presented an entirely new situation. Entry of Italy into the war meant a severe blow upon Britain in the Mediterranean. The direct route to India and Australia was thus cut and a dangerous situation had been created for Britain as regards Egypt and Palestine. The German armies marching gradually on the Western coast of Europe could any day occupy Gibraltar. Suez was already surrounded by the Italian colonies of Somaliland, Eritria, Ethiopia and Libya. Britain had prevented the situation from utter deterioration by sending its armies to Libya and by its bombardment of Taranto. But now the overall control of all Italian operations had been taken over by Hitler and Britain was being reduced to fits by insistent German bombardment.

**Hitler's pressure on South-East Europe.** It is difficult to surmise what would have happened had Germany attacked Britain in the spring of 1940. Germany, after strengthening its western defences, turned to the eastern border. All this time Russia was busy strengthening its defences. It had already taken possession of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. On June 26, 1940, it had occupied Bessarabia, and after that it occupied north Bukovina. Rumania had to cede the northern part of Transylvania to Hungary on August 30, 1940, and the southern part of Dobruja to Bulgaria on September 7. In the meantime German armies were marching towards Bucharest and the German submarines had reached the Black Sea. Probably the immediate object was to help Italy in its war with Greece. It appears that Germans had not anticipated such a rapid advance of the Russian armies in the south-east Europe and it was not prepared to resist this advance.

In the last months of 1940, Russia had to beat a retreat before the increasing influence of Germany in the region. Germany was permitted to send help to its armies in Norway via Finland. In the Balkans also Russia was not in a position to

demand any sphere of influence for itself. If Greece had not bravely resisted the Fascist aggression, then Bulgaria, and probably the Straits of Dardanelles would have come under German influence. By February 1941 German heavy guns had been placed on the Black Sea and the old danger to Ukraine had become very much real.

Hitler's march towards Greece was obstructed by two countries, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. In both the countries Russia had considerable influence, although Britain's influence in Yugoslavia was no less. On March 1, 1941, Bulgaria was forced to join Germany's 'New Order' and give way to German armies in its march towards Greece. On March 25, the Government of Yugoslavia signed an agreement by which its railways were handed over to Germany and its armies were forced to surrender their arms, and it agreed to join the 'New Order'. But people revolted against this agreement. In place of Boris, Peter was declared king, and England as well as Russia promised to help Yugoslavia. But Yugoslavia could not be defended. On April 6, it had to bow before the German armies. The German armies now marched towards Greece.

The British air arm was helping Greece against Italy from the very beginning, and a unit of the British army in North Africa was sent to Greece. But it could not do much. The resistance of the Greek armies was broken. It was pushed back. Gradually entire Greece and the southern islands of Crete, where the Greek king had sought asylum was occupied by the Germans. Thus by the beginning of June, Germany established its domination over the entire Balkans. This domination could not be made stable till such time as British air force could be ousted not only from Crete but also from North Africa. The fall of Crete was a great blow to Britain's prestige. By sending armies to Greece Britain's strength in Egypt was weakened and the result was that General Rommel was able to throw back the British armies from everywhere except Tobruk. Thus Germany's position in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean was very much strengthened. In the meantime, however, Britain had got a breathing time to remove pro-German rulers from the countries of the Middle East and thus strengthen itself. Britain was now so much strengthened in the Middle East that Germany could not conveniently move further in that direction.

**The Difficulties of Russia.** All these months Anglo-Russian collaboration was increasing. They had common interests and approach in Greece and Yugoslavia. Russia viewed with apprehension the growing strength of the Fascist powers in the South-East Europe. In the Mediterranean, as also in the Pacific Ocean, the danger was developing equally for Britain as well as Russia. There were continuous disputes between Russia and Japan on boundary questions. Japan had achieved internal unity and was expanding towards the South. On June 12, 1940, it entered into an agreement with Siam. The fall of France had opened before it the way to Indo-China. On September 29, the anti-Communist agreement between Japan, Germany and Italy was converted into a triangular agreement whose object was to establish a 'New Order' in the continents of Asia and Europe. Thus Russia was surrounded on both sides by the 'New Order'. On 13th April, when the Japanese Foreign Minister, Matsukoa, was returning from Berlin, he entered into an agreement with Molotov at Moscow in which Russia was assured that in case it was attacked by any third country (presumably Germany) Japan would remain neutral. But by the time Matsukoa reached Tokyo he had been removed from his Foreign Ministership. On November 13, Molotov himself reached Berlin and had a personal talk with Hitler for a number of hours. It appears that these negotiations produced no results.

**Relations between Germany and Russia.** The relations between Germany and Russia were never based on mutual trust. By September 1940, Hitler had realised that it was difficult to defeat Britain, and in order to achieve this objective he considered it essential to have under command the entire economic resources of Europe. Russia thus could not have been left free for any considerable length of time. Russia had utilised its agreement with Germany to further strengthen itself. It possessed unlimited man-power and economic resources. The difficulties which Russia had to encounter in order to crush a small country like Finland convinced Hitler that Russia had neither modern military equipments nor an able leadership. Hitler and his advisers estimated that it would not take more than four months to crush Russia. The trade agreement signed between Russia and Germany before the outbreak of the war was not working well. Hitler could not get all the petrol he wanted. He was convinced that if he could get control of the oil and transport

resources of the Soviet Union, he could fulfil his requirements. It is believed that Hitler had decided to attack Russia in the Autumn of 1940, but Gen. Keitel prevented him from doing so. The Triangular agreement between Germany, Italy and Japan on September 27 was a step in this direction. Failure of Molotov-Hitler talks in November further made the problem serious. On November 26, 1940, Russia placed certain demands before Hitler. It was demanded that the areas to the south of Baku and Batum should be considered under Russian sphere of influence, Russia should get air bases in Bulgaria and that German armies should be withdrawn from Finland. These demands clearly spoiled the relations between the two countries. Russian papers no more criticised Churchill and the news of German victories began to be printed in the newspapers at unimportant places. Russia at the same time began a large-scale reorganisation of its armies. On May 6 Stalin assumed the post of Prime Minister and Molotov was made Deputy Prime Minister. This was an important event, because till now Stalin had never occupied any position within the administration. It became apparent from this that Stalin had firmly decided to mobilise the entire strength of the Russian State to face the coming danger.

**German Attack on Russia.** As summer months advanced the German and Russian armies collected at the borders. Hitler had by now mobilised 150 German divisions, 20 Rumanian divisions and 10 Finnish divisions. Russia had 180 divisions. On the morning of June 21, without declaring a war, the German armies crossed the Russian border. The North Army advanced towards Leningrad, under Von Lelb, the Middle Army towards Smolensk under Von Bolk, and the Southern Army moved in the direction of Ukraine under Von Runstedt. All the three armies got initial successes. During the first four months they got possession of 50 per cent of Russia's coal mines, 50 per cent of its steel production, 60 per cent of Russia's iron mines and also the best agricultural portions of Russia. But they absolutely failed to achieve their objective. Even Leningrad could not be occupied. Moscow was yet far away. Russia was covered with ice one month before the normal time, and the winter became very severe, the German soldiers had not enough warm clothing. Their machines cooled off and the transport goods were crushed under snow by the beginning of December. Germans were being thrown back on all fronts

and the signs of ultimate German defeat were clearly visible on the horizon

**Change in America's Attitude.** According as the European democracies were being smashed, the United States of America began to seriously ponder about its policy. It began to lose faith in neutrality and to think in terms of co-operation with the democratic countries. In a statement issued on July 16, 1937, Cordell Hull said. "It is undoubtedly true that there are various areas where the present conflicts and differences apparently appear to touch only the neighbouring countries, but in the final analysis they are affecting the whole world . . . We do not want to involve ourselves in any organisation or troublesome commitments, but we do believe in co-operative efforts of a peaceful and practical type"<sup>1</sup> In order to strengthen this "Co-operative effort" it was necessary to develop the power of "self-defence". The United States was now realising that it could not afford to look disinterestedly at international problems, specially when "the tendency to break all laws was growing, the treaties were being torn to bits, force was increasingly resorted to, and numerous other tendencies were visible" The policy of the United States of America was to keep itself free from international commitments, and at the same time to save itself from the harmful effects of a neutral policy. The policy followed by America at the Brussels Conference was considered a fine example of this co-operative effort. In point of fact, in its Far Eastern policies America deliberately deviated from its neutralist laws

It was clear that America was breaking away from its neutrality, although this feeling could not immediately be removed from the United States. Nevertheless, the feeling was growing that a policy of neutrality is another name for "national suicide" America could not afford to ignore the deliberate trampling of those ideas on which its whole life was based. Cordell Hull said. "If we and our friendly nations forget these principles in the area of the Pacific, which comprises of half the world, then we will be forced to forego them in other parts of the world as well." Actually, the problems of the world could not be viewed in

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1. See C. Hull's *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (Two volumes), W. Johnson's *The Battle Against Isolation*.

compartments The happenings in Europe had made it clear that when treaties are torn as under in any part of the world and violence conquers, its effect inevitably spreads to other countries. It was not possible for America to follow a policy of neutrality, and it had become essential to reply force by force Cordell Hull said in his speech. "The biggest question is Can the glorification of force be again allowed, and can it be permitted that international anarchy and barbarism be again established, or is it essential that America and other peace-loving nations, having the fullest faith in those principles on which international system is based, should continuously, alone or with the co-operation of the other nations, in accordance with the situation and in line with traditional policies and behaviour and enlightened self-interest, encourage justice, morality, law and order on an international basis and defend them?" In the words of President Roosevelt, "Active efforts should be made to defend Peace. America hates war America hopes for Peace and that is why it is searching for peace in an active manner"

**Active Search for Peace.** As the clouds of war became more dense over Europe this "active search for peace" became more intense. On August 16, 1937, Cordell Hull said in a radio speech "Whatever may be our wishes and hopes, when trouble has spread in another place, we cannot hope to remain untouched. When destruction, poverty and starvation are spreading in other areas, howsoever we may type we cannot keep our economic order as it is When the light of freedom is going off in one country after another, when our ideals of individual liberty and our dear political and social institutions are in danger, when in a greater part of the world the respect for the human soul is denied, and when this denial has become a slogan under which large-scale propaganda is made and armies have marched, then none of us can believe that our country or our homes can remain safe" Two days after this, speaking at a University in Canada, Roosevelt said. "In America we are no more a far away continent which can remain uninfluenced or unharmed by the conflicts across the ocean" In his speech Roosevelt promised fullest aid to Canada without attaching any conditions On January 4, 1939, in his annual address to the United States Congress, the President referred to "the storm-



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signals from the other side of the ocean" and said this about the events in Europe "No doubt a war which threatened to engulf the entire world in its flames has been postponed, but it is becoming increasingly clear that peace cannot be considered to be safe"

**The Organisation of American Countries** In the meantime efforts were on to organise all the countries of the American continent This Pan-American Organisation was begun at a conference in Montevideo in 1933. The United States renounced its right to interfere in the affairs of Cuba and withdrew its warships from Haiti. With the help of five other American Republics it helped in the solution of conflicts between Bolivia and Paraguay In 1936, on U S inspiration, an Inter-American Conference was convened in Buenos Aires "with a view to defend peace" and a policy of Inter-American co-operation was announced At the 8th Pan-American Conference held at Lima in December 1938, this policy of organisation and co-operation was further strengthened. Speaking before the New York Bar Association on January 27, 1939, America's Assistant Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, characterised the declarations of Buenos Aires and Lima as of "historic importance" and said "These have begun a new and auspicious chapter in the history of the Western hemisphere"

### **United States Support of the Democratic Countries**

The German armies crossed the Polish border on September 1, 1939. On September 3, President Roosevelt in a radio speech drew the attention of the peoples of the world to "a simple but unchangeable truth of modern international relations" namely, "when peace is disturbed in any part of the world, then peace is in danger in every country at every place" America decided to remain neutral, but it was at the same time made clear that neutrality in war did not mean neutrality in ideas. The obstructions of the 1935 Neutrality Act were proving irksome, and Roosevelt himself began to propagate against it The result was that the Neutrality Act was amended in November 1941 and the nations of the world were permitted "to pay cash and take finished goods from America" This clause was clearly advantageous to only those nations which had enough ships, but in the summer of 1940, when the democratic countries of Europe were collapsing before Hitlerite armies, it became essential for the United States to take greater interest in European

affairs, specially in matters relating to the defence of Britain. Roosevelt now published a three-point programme whose object was (i) to increase the ground, air and naval power of the United States, (ii) to further consolidate the organisation of the Western hemisphere and (iii) to more intensively help countries fighting against Fascist aggression. In September 1940, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, military training was made compulsory in peace time. During the war days America prepared 2,46,201 aeroplanes, 87,000 tanks, 24,34,553 trucks, 1,35,000 guns, etc.<sup>1</sup> Its air power was very much enhanced. In July 1940, another Inter-American Conference was called at Havana where it was decided that no European colony in America could be transferred to any other European country. The relations of United States with Canada were strengthened. Britain was given more active help. America also now agreed to supply military goods for which naval bases were mortgaged to it as against cash payments. Under this arrangement, five American warships were supplied to Britain and much other war materials were also sent there. After some time America undertook upon itself the responsibility of transporting these goods to its destination under its own protection. Roosevelt said: "It is necessary to keep the light of democracy burning. . . it is not enough that we from time to time keep on cutting the wick and cleaning the glass. Now the time has come when in order to keep the wick burning it is necessary to supply more oil."

**Attack on Pearl Harbour.** In the meantime, the relations between Japan and the United States of America were continuously deteriorating, and Japan's advance to the South had created a new difficulty for the United States. America had very much reduced its trade with Japan. After the fall of France and Holland, Japan increased its pressure upon Indo-China and Indonesia. On December 7, 1941, it suddenly attacked the U. S. Naval base at Pearl Harbour and destroyed five of its battleships, three destroyers, and a number of other ships and severely damaged several cruisers, 177 aeroplanes were also destroyed. Thus Japan entered the War with a big explosion and all on a sudden on the side of the Fascist nations, and its main target was America's naval power in the

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<sup>1</sup> See D. M. Nelson: *Arsenal of Democracy. The History of American Production.*

Pacific After Pearl Harbour it attacked the Philippines and very soon occupied it In East Asia, Japan was winning almost with the same speed with which in the previous year Hitler had succeeded in Europe. Within a few months Japan had full occupation of Malaya, Burma and Indonesia. By May 1942, the greater part of the Pacific Ocean had become a Japanese Lake and the Indian Ocean became, so to say, a Japanese Bay Between the Japanese Island and its enemies, there lay thousands of miles of sea in which hundreds of islands were converted into powerful forts It was clear that to break this fortification and cross thousands of miles of sea with a view to attacking Japan was almost beyond imagination But for America it had not only become a question of prestige but also of its very existence, and in order to wipe the shame of its defeat it marshalled all its resources and power.

**The War in North Africa.** In March 1941, the German armies under the able leadership of Gen Rommel attacked the British armies at a place called Alga and this attack was so ferocious that there was no other way left for the British troops except to fly away They took refuge in Egypt. It is certain that if Rommel's field operations had not become so widespread and Hitler had not been so involved in it, the German armies would have definitely reached Cairo and Suez. The summer of 1941 was utilised by Britain to strengthen its military position, and in November they counter-attacked Rommel's armies and pushed it behind up to Benghazi In May and June 1942 there were some terrible battles fought in North Africa By July the British troops were thrown back again to El-Alamien. In August 1942, the British Army which was in North Africa was brought under the command of Gen Montgomery Montgomery was a very capable general By October he reorganised his armies, and by October end he threw back Rommel's armies by about 1,400 miles Suez was now saved and all Hitler's dreams to occupy Britain's lifelines in the Mediterranean were dashed to the ground The initiative had now passed into the hands of the Allies On November 8 their armies landed in North Africa Gen Eisenhower was the commander of the American armies American armies were opposed in Algeria and Morocco In Europe Germany took entire France under its military occupation and attempted to take under its possession nearly 60 warships which were lying

in the Toulon harbour. But in this Germany failed because before Toulon could be occupied by them, the warships were skittled. The military might of the Allied armies was now continuously increasing. The war continued to be fought in the winter of 1943. By May 1943, it had become clear that there were no hopes for a German victory. The Axis powers had to pay a very heavy price in the North African war. It is estimated that 41 of their warships, 5 lakh tonnage of their commercial ships, 8,000 aeroplanes, 6,000 guns, 2,550 tanks and 70,000 trucks were destroyed and above a million soldiers were either killed or captured. The greatest advantage which befell the Allied nations by their victory in North Africa was that they could now attack Europe at a point where it was comparatively less fortified.

**The Allied Attack on Italy.** After the victory over Tunisia, the Allied armies moved towards Sicily. Their object was to capture Marina and then to land on Italian soil. Marina fell on August 17 and 37,000 Germans were captured and nearly 1,000 planes and huge war material fell into the hands of the Allied armies. The attack on Italy began in July 1943. On September 3, Italy surrendered unconditionally. In the meantime, Mussolini had fallen. Marshal Badoglio had assumed the reins of power in Italy. Germany made supreme efforts to prevent further advance of Allied armies with the result that War in Italy was very much prolonged, although after the fall of Rome on June 4, Hitler had hardly any hope left for reoccupying Italy.

**The Russo-German War:** In the winter of 1941 the German armies were withdrawing from Russia after their failure. But Hitler decided to launch another severe attack on Russia in the summer of 1942. This time the German armies did not advance towards Leningrad or Moscow. Their object was to occupy the oil fields of the Caucasus. The Russian counter-attack at Kharkov undoubtedly reduced the speed of German advance, but after that the Nazi armies moved towards Sevastopol, and within a very short time they ejected the Russians from Crimea and continued their advance along the Black Sea coast. Within six weeks they marched a distance of 250 miles and reached Rostov. By the end of August they had advanced another 200 miles. At the same time another German army attacked Stalingrad. On August 23, 1942, began the ferocious battle of Stalingrad.

in which the Russians very powerfully resisted the German armies. The battle was fought practically in every building, every house, room and even every staircase. Within two months more than a million bombs were dropped upon Stalingrad and nearly 2 lakh Germans were killed. By the beginning of November it had become clear that Stalingrad was invincible. The Russian armies fought with great heroism under the leadership of Marshal Zhukov and their resistance was continuously strengthened because from all sides innumerable Russian troops and unlimited war supplies were reaching Stalingrad. By the end of November the German army began to be surrounded on all sides, and by December they were completely encircled. Now the Russians counter-attacked and the Red Army began to retake one city after another. In the summer of 1943, Germany made one more supreme effort to prevent the advance of the Russian troops. But in this it was completely unsuccessful. On August 23, Kharkov was reoccupied by the Russians and by the beginning of November they reached the Dnieper and began crossing it at many points. Between July and October the Russian army had killed about 9 lakh German soldiers and nearly 18 lakhs were either surrounded or taken prisoner. The Russians destroyed 10,000 German planes, 17,000 tanks, 75,000 military trucks. By January 1944, the Red Army had reached eastern Poland and in the beginning of April they entered Rumania. In the north they achieved even greater success. In January 1944, German troops were ejected from southern Finland and the Red Army began to advance along the Baltic coast. The strength of the Red Army was continuously increasing. Germany made all attempts to strengthen its defences. But it was now abundantly clear that it could not win the war.

**Victory in West Europe.** When Stalin attacked Germany he demanded that the Allied powers should open a second front on the western borders of Germany, but they seemed to show no sign of enthusiasm for it. Churchill's idea was that the Allied armies should move towards Germany from the south-east, but this would have created in Russia a feeling that this was being done in order to prevent the growth of its influence in south-east Europe. In April 1942, a decision was arrived at to open a second front in the West but the steps taken to implement this decision were very slow. In December 1943, Eisenhower was made the Supreme Commander

of the Allied Forces. Preparations for an attack were begun in January 1944. In the beginning attempts were made to destroy the defence lines on the eastern coast and in areas of possible attack and also to destroy the air bases. The areas to be attacked were air surveyed and nearly seven miles of harbours were got ready in order to land the armies. June 6 was fixed as the date of attack and it was launched at midnight. Within 24 hours more than 225,000 soldiers were landed and began to advance rapidly. Within ten days their number reached 5 lakhs, and they were very well equipped with war materials. In the very beginning they occupied an area 70 miles wide and 12 miles deep. By June 20, about 41,000 German soldiers were captured. But the progress of the armies was rather slow in the first seven weeks. One reason for this was that this area was full of thorny and dense bushes and it took a long time to clear them. The march of the armies became swift after 25th July. On August 15 another unit of French and American armies entered France from the south. Paris was liberated on August 19 and the Government of Gen. de Gaulle was established. It is undoubted that these attacks had shaken the German morale, but gradually they were retreating to the Siegfried Line. By 15th September entire France was liberated and the last German soldier left France soil.

It proved a very difficult task for the Allied nations to break the defence lines of the Germans. They attempted to land their soldiers behind the German lines by aeroplanes, but in this they did not meet with much success. These defence lines were constructed after years of hard labour and they were very strong. The Allied armies also attempted to reach Holland and Belgium by the sea-route, but here they had to face strong German opposition. In October, at Aachen, this wall was broken but it did not produce any considerable consequences. Germany had been suffering great military losses and no other way was open to it except to reach a decision by a strong counter-attack. On December 16 Germany launched a powerful counter-offensive at Ardennes, and within a week the German armies advanced fifty miles and created a forty-mile wide path for themselves in the Allied lines. But they could do nothing beyond this. In the words of a German General, the Germans had thrown their last dice and they had lost. After this the Allied armies began to advance swiftly. They

had three objectives : to expel the German armies from West Rhineland, to cross the Rhine, and to capture or destroy the remaining German armies. The first objective was achieved between February and March and the Rhine was crossed with amazing success. To surround the German armies from many sides was no more a difficult task. In the meantime the work of liberating the various countries from German domination was continued.

In the summer of 1944 the Russian armies began to move towards the west. They had occupied Finland and Rumania. After occupying Rumania it was not at all difficult to occupy Bulgaria and Hungary. In the meantime, Yugoslavia had successfully expelled the German armies and declared its independence. Thus Germany was surrounded on all sides. There were no hopes of victory. The Russian winter attack could not be launched on January 12, 1945, but by this time they had occupied a huge area and could advance on a number of fronts. Every nook and corner of Germany was being bombed and German aeroplanes were being systematically destroyed. By April 1945 German air power was crushed. The German armies fighting in Italy had also been by now crushed. On April 28 Mussolini was murdered by his own people and on 29th April Italy surrendered as a result of which nearly 10 lakh German soldiers were captured. In the meantime the march of the Russian armies was continuing. Goering forsook Hitler on April 23 and on April 29 Himmler also broke away from Hitler. On April 30th, when the Russian armies were about to enter Berlin, Hitler, his wife Eva Braunn and Goebbels and some other companions committed suicide. The Russians occupied Berlin on May 2, and on May 8 the German navy surrendered unconditionally and thus ended the terrible Second World War in Europe.

**Victory in the Pacific.** After the spring of 1943, American Marines, under the protection of a powerful naval fleet, continued to advance in the Pacific and occupied one island after another. Each new island occupied was converted into a base for further advance. The Japanese naval forces were gradually retreating. The occupation of Gilbert and Marshal Islands by America in the winter of 1943-44 endangered the second line of Japanese defence. By July 1944 the Americans occupied the Marina Islands, from where it was possible to launch attacks upon Japan. By the end of October

American battleships and heavy cruisers had reached the west of the Philippines. Japan considered the defence of the Philippines most essential, and it sent there large numbers of naval ships and armies, but they were destroyed. By January 5, 1945, America had occupied Luzon, Manila and other important Philippine cities. Nearly 5,50,000 Japanese soldiers were killed or taken prisoner in the Philippines. After this the American navy occupied Iwojima and Okinawa, which were at a distance of 750 and 330 miles, respectively, from Japan. In the defence of Okinawa alone the Japanese lost 1,18,000 soldiers. By May 1945, the Allied nations had reoccupied Burma. In the meantime, Japan was being heavily air-bombed and its big cities and industrial centres were being destroyed. Japan was now convinced that any further resistance on its part was an impossible proposition. After Tojo resigned from the Prime Ministership, another Government was formed under Kojio. Even in the beginning of 1944 Japan had begun to believe that it could not win the war. But it could not accept defeat so long as Germany was fighting. After the fall of Germany no other way was open to Japan except surrender. On August 6, an atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. On August 8 Russia declared war on Japan and another atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9. Now no other way was open to Japan except immediate surrender. On August 14, it accepted all the terms laid by the Allied nations. These terms were (i) to remove all those elements from the administration which were till then running it, (ii) to limit Japanese territory to only those islands which had Japanese population; (iii) to try the Japanese war criminals and punish them, (iv) Allied occupation of Japan and (v) establishment of democratic institutions in Japan. With the acceptance of these terms by Japan the World War ended on the Asian continent as well, and thus the world was free from this great holocaust in which more than 1 1/2 crores of people lost their lives. Now a tired and oppressed humanity began to look up with some hope on those persons who were charged with the responsibility of creating an international organisation which would make war in future an impossibility.

**Search for a basis for peace.** Even when the Second World War was at its height people were discussing the lines upon which the world would have to be reconstructed after the War. Even before America entered the war in January 1941,



President Roosevelt had announced his formula of four human freedoms: Freedom of speech and thought, of religion, Freedom from poverty, and from fear. In August 1941, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill had announced the famous Atlantic Charter from a place near New Foundland which had emphasised the following. (i) No country will attempt to draw economic profits out of the war, (ii) the state boundaries should be changed in accordance with the wishes of the people, (iii) every nation will have the right to decide the form of government it wants, (iv) those countries which had been deprived of political freedom will have the fullest right to get back their old freedom, (v) not only will all nations be assured against aggression and fear but every attempt would be made to free its people from poverty and fear, (vi) an international organisation will be created with a view to preserving world peace.

After thus many international conferences of the Allied nations were held to solve problems over which there were differences among them, and also to decide the basis for future peace. Of these the Casablanca Conference of 1943, the Moscow Conference of 1943, the Teheran Conference of December 1943, the Yalta Conference of 1945, and the July-August 1945 Conference at Potsdam deserve special mention. At Moscow it was decided to divide the Balkan countries between Russian and British spheres of influence. At Yalta decisions were taken about the future of Germany and Poland and the future boundaries of the Balkan countries were also discussed. At Yalta Russia was given many rights over East Asia. But in between these conferences the differences between the East and the West was growing, and so when the problem of establishing peace came, unexpected difficulties and complications arose.

**The War-time Treaties.** Russia insisted that it should be free to enter into independent treaties with East European countries. The Western nations accepted it. But when they on their part wanted a similar freedom for a treaty with Italy, Russia objected. The task of drafting the treaties was given to the Foreign Ministers of four big nations—Bevin, Burns, Bidault and Molotov. And by February 1947 after exchanging views with other countries, they succeeded in securing the signatures of the concerned countries on these treaties. Italy was forced to cede its border areas to France, Greece and Yugoslavia, and an independent regime was est-

abished in Trieste under the supervision of the United Nations; the independence of Libya was recognised; Italian Somaliland was put under the protection of the United Nations. Eritria was similarly given over to the United Nations, and Ethiopia was liberated. Rumania got back that portion of Transylvania which had been snatched by Hungary in 1940. But Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina was not taken away from Russia, but given to it. The Bulgarian boundaries expanded a bit because it got southern Dobruja from Rumania. Finland was forced to give certain territories to Russia. Apart from this all the defeated nations were forced to pay huge amounts as compensation.

**The Establishment of the United Nations.** The Atlantic Charter of August 1942 had already suggested the creation of an international organisation to preserve peace. In January 1942, a United Nations Charter was signed by the United States, Russia, Britain, and China. It was later signed by 41 other countries. In this the firm decision was expressed to fight against the Fascist countries to the very end and every nation assured that it would not enter into a separate treaty with the enemy. At the Moscow Conference in October 1943, the four big nations gave the assurance to work for the creation of an international organisation for preserving peace. Later at Dumbarton Oaks, the four big nations placed before the other countries a comprehensive scheme for an international organisation. The representatives of 50 nations met at San Francisco in April 1945 to discuss this scheme, and after discussions lasting for two months, they published the United Nations Charter. By October 1945, most of the Allied nations signed this Charter, and the United Nations came into being.

**The Organisation of the United Nations.** The chief parts of the United Nations Organisations are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court and the Secretariat. Every member nation has a right to send its representatives to the General Assembly. Its sessions are held in September, but by a majority decision of the members or on the initiative of the Security Council, a special session can also be convened. On important questions a two-thirds majority is necessary, and for ordinary questions a bare majority is enough for a decision. The main work of the General Assembly is to discuss international problems. It can

only recommend but cannot decide. Under the constitution of the United Nations, the power for final decision rests with the Security Council. The General Assembly works through sub-committees. There are eleven members on the Security Council out of which six are elected for a period of two years and the remaining five—United States, Russia, Britain, China and France—are permanent members. From the point of view of the U.N. Constitution the Security Council is its chief body; it is in continuous session. Its chief object is to preserve world peace. It enquires into international disputes and takes action against aggressors. It can, of course, take diplomatic and economic steps against defaulting nations, but it also has powers to take military action. The greatest difficulty in the work of the Security Council, however, lies in the fact that none of its decisions can be implemented till it has the support of all the five permanent members. Thus every big nation has got the power of veto, and in a world which is fast dividing into two camps this power of veto has more or less made the Security Council ineffective. Many sub-committees dealing with military or atomic energy, or similar other problems, work along with the Security Council. Some efforts have been made to secure disarmament during the last few years.

The Economic and Social Council consists of 18 members. It has nothing to do with politics. Its task is to remove the economic and social causes of war. This organisation has been founded on the basis that if standards of living can be raised, and if one has the fullest assurance of human rights, then a better atmosphere can be created for the preservation of world peace. The Economic and Social Council works through many special bodies, such as the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the Food and Agricultural Organisation, the World Health Organisation, etc. It also appoints special committees from time to time to study specific problems. Its main work is to place its recommendations on economic and social problems before the general body and also before the different nations. There is no doubt that this organisation has done very good work in the course of the last few years.

The main object of the Trusteeship Council is to help the General Assembly in the administration of those countries over which the United Nations has to be made a Trustee. Its main object is to raise the standard of administration of the colonial

countries. In point of fact this Council has very little power. It can listen to the complaints of the colonies, but can give very little help in removing these complaints.

The International Court, like the Court of the League of Nations, is an attempt to solve the legal difficulties that arise between different states. It has nothing to do with political differences. All organisations of the United Nations can consult it on any question relating to International Law.

The work of the Secretariat is to help the work of these organisations, but its Secretary-General has got the right to draw the attention of the Security Council to any specific question which he may consider necessary.

We have given above a brief account of some of the main bodies of the United Nations. Since the inception of the United Nations, these bodies have been doing their work with great interest and devotion, and though the U.N.O. may not have achieved any spectacular political success, these other organisations have made real contribution in their respective fields. In the political field, the United Nations has no doubt achieved some success, but we have to remember that the very basis of the establishment of the United Nations was co-operation between big nations, specially between America and Russia. But this co-operation has been day by day going down and with it the utility of the United Nations Organisation.

**Russia: The Growth in its Power.** Compared to other countries Russia had to bear the greatest loss during the war. Eight lakh square miles of its territory was devastated by the Nazi invaders and 30 lakhs of its soldiers killed. It has been estimated that in the Battle of Stalingrad alone the number of Russians who died will be equal to all the soldiers of America who died in World War II, and in the battle of Kharkov alone the number of Russians killed will be equal to the number of Americans killed in the entire war against Japan. The proportion of soldiers killed between the rest of the Allies and Russia is said to be 1 : 10. Apart from this,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  crores of Russian citizens were deprived of homes. The War, however, resulted in great advantages to the Soviet Union and it got possession of various new territories. Further many states situated on its borders came under the influence of its economic policies and Russian influence was greatly est-

ablished in their internal administration as also in foreign policies. The greatest advantage to the Soviet Union in the War was the great self-confidence which it got by successfully throwing back the unprecedented might of the German armies. As a matter of fact, within the last one century Russia achieved such a big military success for the first time. As a result its influence in world diplomacy also considerably increased. Russia got many other advantages as well. The Communist regime was even more firmly established in the country and Stalin's prestige rose very high<sup>1</sup>. After the War the military leaders were not allowed to dominate the administration in any way. The Communist Party also was purged of undesirable elements, and thus the entire power was centralised in Stalin to a greater extent.

After the war Stalin and his colleagues devoted their entire energy to develop the strength of the country<sup>2</sup>. An atmosphere of insecurity was maintained in the country. It was always emphasised that the danger to Russia was not yet over, and the capitalist-imperialist countries were determined to attack it and destroy its ideology. The armies were not reduced to any considerable extent, and research continued on preparing powerful weapons of war. In 1943 the International Organisation of Communist Parties, the Comintern, had been dissolved. But in 1947, another organisation, the Cominform, was reorganised and Russia again began to interfere in the internal political life of other countries. Whatever war compensation Russia got was fully utilized to increase its strength. The Potsdam declaration of July 1945 had authorised Russia to remove German industries from its sphere of influence in Germany, and also to have its share in other German industries. Apart from this, Russia got huge amounts as war compensation from Hungary, Rumania, Finland and Italy, and it had also received huge amounts of war material from the United States. All this was utilised by Russia to increase its strength. In February 1944, Russia launched its fourth five-year plan whose main object was not to produce goods for the daily consumption

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1 See I. Deutscher, *Stalin: A Biography*.

2. For more detailed study see D. Dallin's *Forced Labour in the Soviet Union* and *Soviet Russia and the Far East*, Gooch, *Russia in Perspective*; Mandel, *Guide to the Soviet Union*, Naim, *East of the Iron Curtain*, G. Sovolveytchek, *Russia in Perspective*, and V. Yakhortoff, *U.S.S.R. Foreign Policy*.

of the people but to increase production with a view to develop national strength. The result was that when this plan was fulfilled the heavy industries in Russia increased by 66 per cent whereas the consumer goods industries increased only by 26 per cent. Besides this, Russia removed its industries from its western borders, where they could be endangered in the event of a war, and established them in the Urals, and in this undeveloped area many new cities were established where huge industries began to flourish. As a result of these plans Russia got so strengthened that in the event of war with the Western countries it could crush entire Europe.

**Britain: Struggle for Existence.** The Second World War also did great damage to Britain. Six lakhs of Britons were killed or wounded, about 40 lakh houses were destroyed, the number of its cargo ships came down considerably, and its internal as also external debt increased to very big proportions. In the words of its famous economist Keynes. "In order to achieve immediate strength Britain sacrificed all considerations for its future." Immediately after the War there were elections to the British Parliament in which the Labour Party had a stunning victory over the Conservative Party and a Labour Government was established in Britain. This was a great victory for democracy and Britain is the only country where such a big political change could be effected so peacefully. Whereas on the one hand the War had resulted in a tremendous increase in the power of Stalin in Russia, in Britain Churchill was removed from office with the greatest ease, and under Attlee's leadership the Labour Party got the reins of administration. The Labour Party immediately undertook a programme of nationalisation. The British economy had been completely crushed as a result of the war. In order to maintain their standards of living the only way open to the British people was to produce more and more for export. For this the British underwent great hardship. The Labour Party believed that in order to increase production, it was essential to bring big mines and industries in fact the entire economy, under control. This work was begun by the nationalisation of banking and insurance on February 14, 1946. As a result of the nationalisation of the banks, Government's direct or indirect control was established over the economic life of the country. In August the air services were nationalised. In January 1947 the coal mines were nationalised and later the entire transport of Britain was brought under

Government control This was followed by the nationalisation of electricity. On May 4, 1949, the gas industry was nationalised, followed by nationalisation of iron and steel on May 9 Thus 20 per cent of the country's economy came under complete Government control, it further controlled considerably the remaining part of the economy All this, on the whole, had a very salutary effect, and it is generally assumed that the progress of reconstruction in post-war years in Britain far exceeds the progress made in any other country.<sup>1</sup>

The development of agriculture is also receiving considerable attention Britain has also been getting some loans from Canada, America, etc But the main credit for its economic reconstruction should be attributed to the willingness of the British people to sacrifice and lead a hard life Social amenities for the people have also increased Social security is now very much guaranteed. Education, especially higher education, has been expanded Almost free medical service is assured for the whole nation, and houses have been constructed for lakhs of people under government care Britain has made considerable advance in the last few years in the direction of the achievement of economic equality. The more important point is that even when the Conservative Party came to power in 1951, these items of the nation's well-being were allowed to continue as before<sup>2</sup> As a result of the shocks received in World War II, Britain has been forced to reorganise and reorientate its vast empire Britain has been making supreme efforts for national prosperity and for maintaining its national prestige, but it is too early to say whether it has finally succeeded.

**France: In the Abyss of Destruction.** Probably France suffered the most in the War. Its economic loss has been estimated at 26 billion dollars Nearly 5 lakh houses were completely destroyed as a result of which 7½ lakh families became homeless. Its railway lines were destroyed over hundreds of miles Its ships were

1. JED Hall *Labour's First Year*

For a critical review of Labour Party see J. Jewkes' *Ordeal by Planning*; A L Rouse *The End of an Epoch* In this second book light is thrown on the foreign policy of Britain between 1945-8, as also on its efforts at economic reconstruction

2 For a review of Britain's relations with its colonies during the last few years see H V Hotson's *20th Century Empire* and N Mansergh's *The Commonwealth and the Nations*

sunk and its ports were ruined. In the industrial sector, 50,000 factories were destroyed and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs of factories suffered severe damages. About 60 lakhs acres of its land were unfit for cultivation. Nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs of its soldiers and 2 lakhs civilians were killed. No other country had suffered such a terrible destruction, and the great tragedy of France was that it had no leader of first rank who could take the country as a whole under his powerful leadership towards economic reconstruction. During the War, after the fall of France de Gaulle continued resistance.<sup>1</sup> After the war a Fourth Republic was established in France and in place of de Gaulle, Felix Guan, the leader of the Socialist Party, became its Prime Minister. An Economic Council of 164 members was constituted for economic reconstruction. Two important reforms were undertaken in order to remove the defects of the old administration. On the one hand, decentralisation was emphasised, and on the other an attempt was made to link the administration of colonies with the administration of France. But from the economic point of view progress in France was very slow. A sharp conflict of ideologies was still continuing in France. Some people were emphasising nationalisation, but there were others who wanted to leave the question of economic reconstruction to individual initiative. An attempt was made to increase production under the Monnet plan. On a whole some economic progress was registered, but it was far from satisfactory. From the political point of view, France remained anarchic, the Democratic, Socialist and the Communist parties continued to work and quarrel as before. De Gaulle, who had now no relations with the Government was trying to organise the people of all political parties into one organisation on the basis of nationalism. Large numbers of people saw a solution of their difficulties in communism. It is undoubtedly true that if America had at that time not implemented a programme of European reconstruction, the Communist movement would have become very powerful in France.

**Italy and other Dictator countries of South-East Europe.** The waves of another War had crossed Italy, and Italy was once again experiencing the feeling of national dishonour. After the War a joint Allied military council was established

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<sup>1</sup> See G. Cattani, *Charles de Gaulle*. An account of the resistance movement in France will be found in E. Shibre's *Paris Underground*.



to run the administration of Italy. Almost all Allied powers were represented in it, but the most decisive influence was that of America and Britain, especially of Britain. The main object of the Allied nations in Italy was to destroy Fascism and to encourage democracy, and they were prepared to remove their armies from Italy as soon as a democratic administration was established. Britain was interested in the growth of a capitalist democracy in Italy so that its lifelines in the Mediterranean could be secure. The result, however, was that Britain ignored those elements in Italy who carried on underground resistance against Germany during the War years and who had the support of the Italian people. After the War, in the summer of 1946, elections were held in Italy, after which a Republic was declared. Italy's problems, however, were so complicated that they could not be easily solved. Italy had also suffered very severe loss during the war. Apart from the heavy loss it incurred in regard to its army, navy and air force, its agriculture as well as industry were also completely crushed. Communist influence continuously increased in Italy. The Communists were promising far-reaching land reforms under which redistribution of land was guaranteed. They were also emphasising the equal distribution of wealth and income in the country and the nationalisation of banks and key industries. These schemes also had the support of other political parties. Strikes and anarchy were increasing in the country and it is certain that if America had not offered its economic aid France as well as Italy would have gone to the Communist camp.

**Franco's Spain.** It can well be said that the Second World War began with the Civil War in Spain. But Spain remained neutral during the War. It is certain that in the first three years of the War, Spain helped Germany directly or indirectly, but in 1942, when the tide of the War turned, Spain first became neutral, and later it followed a policy of sympathetic neutrality towards the Allies. It is certain that if the Allied nations had not received the moral support of Spain, they would have met with difficulties in their plans for the military invasion of Europe. When the War ended, Spain was in difficult straits from the economic point of view. The standard of the living of the country had very much gone down and the political life was under a police regime. General Franco made an attempt to give a wider base to his dictatorial regime. But

at the same time, due to fear of civil war and the communists, he continued to maintain the police administration. Spain is the only country in the world about which it can be said that the army of the country behaves and lives in a manner as though it were an army of occupation. The military authorities have wide political powers. The policy of neutrality had resulted in a slight improvement in the economic life of Spain. But after the War the conditions continued to deteriorate. The vesting of complete political power in the hands of a dictatorial landlord and capitalist regime stood in the way of any reforms in the country. Spain was very anxious to join the United Nations in order to raise its international prestige. In the initial years it was not admitted to the United Nations because the Franco regime was regarded as one which had come into existence with the help of the Axis powers. But as the cold war between America and Russia developed, the opposition of the Western democracies towards Spain lessened, but Russia had firmly decided to use its power of veto in regard to the question of admission of Spain to the United Nations. In May 1949 the General Assembly of the United Nations announced that every country was free to have any relations with Spain it wanted. After this Spain has entered into trade agreements with Argentina, France and Great Britain, and the American attitude towards Spain had also become sympathetic, though America has not included Spain in its programmes for European economic reconstruction.

**Salazar's Portugal.** As in Spain, so in Portugal, there is a dictatorial regime under Salazar, which continues its traditions of dictatorship and autocracy. During the War years Portugal remained neutral like Spain and took full advantage of its neutrality by trading with both sides. The result was that when the War ended, Salazar's government was in a fairly prosperous way. At the same time, however, we should not forget that the Portuguese people are the poorest in Europe, and both from the point of view of agriculture as also industry, Portugal is a very very backward country. If after the war the attitude of the Allied nations towards Portugal has been sympathetic the reason is to be attributed to the fact that it has been staunchly anti-communist from the very beginning. Britain has maintained relations with Portugal for the last six centuries and its economic policy has become a part of the economic life of Britain. America's policy has never been

so much opposed to Portugal it has been opposed to Spain. The result, however, has been that as the Western nations became more and more sympathetic towards Portugal Russia's attitude towards it has stiffened. Portugal is an important member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the military strength of this small country is being continuously increased. The result has been that while countries like England and France have been forced to quit their colonies, Portugal seems to be determined to keep under its possession such colonies in Asia as Goa, Macao, etc. And although this policy of Portugal is being vehemently opposed in Asia, the Western Nations and America continue to extend to it their moral support.

**Germany Defeated and Crushed.** After the surrender of Germany, America, Britain, Russia and France took in their hands its administration. This country, the central place of European culture, was divided into four parts in which these four nations established their different regimes.<sup>1</sup>

In Berlin, the capital of Germany, the four big nations established a joint administration. The very object of the occupation of Germany presumably was that these four nations would rule over Germany in co-operation, but it was apparent from the very beginning that this co-operation was not possible. The Western nations and the Soviet Union had big differences on almost all matters—foreign and internal trade, land reforms, education, war compensation, political organisation etc. In January 1945 America and Britain established a joint government in co-operation with each other. The victorious nations wanted that the military might of Germany should be crushed and it should be liberated from Nazi ideology, and those Germans who had gone and settled in Poland and Czechoslovakia should be called back and settled in Germany. The well-known leaders of Nazi Germany namely Goering, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, etc. were hanged and many other leaders were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. But the problem of economic reconstruction could not be so easily solved, and unless German economy improved, it was not possible for it to pay war compensation. The economic reconstruction of Germany, however, became yet more difficult on account

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<sup>1</sup> For a good account of the Military administration of Germany by the Allied Nations see S. Friedemann's *The Allied Military Government of Germany*.

of the differences between the East and the West. Russian influence was continuously increasing in East Europe, and the result was that the Western nations stopped thinking in terms of war compensation. Then new thinking was how to prepare Germany to take active part on their side in the coming war. England and America now began to give attention to the development of agriculture and industry in their respective zones of Germany. The earlier policy of destroying the German industries was reversed. Both England and America now supplied Germany with substantial capital for industrial development. The result was that by 1951, German production was on a par with the pre-War level, and its export trade also considerably increased. Russia was carrying on far-reaching economic reforms in its zone of Germany, but these reforms were based on a policy of nationalisation. The political progress of East Germany might have been checked but it is clear that under Russian control spectacular success was achieved there in the direction of economic advance within a short time.

In the summer of 1948 Western Germany was allowed to prepare the outline of a new constitution for itself, but foreign affairs, foreign trade, industrial policy and other important subjects were kept out of its jurisdiction. But the very fact that the Germans were allowed to draft a constitution for themselves indicates a new attitude of the Western powers towards Germany. General elections were held in August 1949 under the new constitution, and in this 80 per cent of the voters took part. The elections gave a majority to the Christian Democrats who politically belonged to the Right Wing, the next best were the Democratic Socialists who were the leading Leftist party in Western Germany. Their numbers respectively were 139 and 131. The leader of the first party was Adenauer. He, with the help of independent democrats who numbered 52, constituted in September 1949, the first elected Government after 1933. In the meantime in Eastern Germany a constitution was prepared under the principles of people's democracy and a German Government was installed under this Constitution. Actually, Germany became the chief point of the cold war between the East and the West. The Western nations wanted to use Germany as a strong fort against the spread of communism and on this they were prepared to spend unlimited wealth, on the other hand, in the interest of the spread of its ideology, and backed

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by the powerful Red Army and the most up-to-date armaments, Russia wanted to use Germany to carry forward its own influence. The blockade of Berlin became the chief front of this conflict. In the course of the Potsdam declaration, the Western nations had been given certain portions in Berlin. But the areas in West Germany under their control were a hundred miles away from their possessions in Berlin. Russia attempted to break the contacts of Berlin with the Western nations by sea and land, as a counterblast to which the Western nations landed in Berlin many lakhs tons of goods by air. After 10 months towards the end of April 1949, Russia lifted the blockade of Berlin. In the meantime, France was engaged in efforts to take the Saar, the chief coal area of Germany, under its influence on a long-term basis. Germany, which once wanted to become the leader of the world, was now made the playground and puppet for the fulfilment of national ambitions and international politics.

**The end of Democracy in Czechoslovakia.** Czechoslovakia had gone under German tutelage even before the outbreak of World War II, and till the end of the War Germany continued to occupy it. In these seven years the population and resources of the country were fully utilised for the benefit of Germany. Since, however, the Czechoslovakian territory was not in the range of Allied bombardment, it did not suffer much industrial destruction. After the end of the War, leaving aside Carpatho-Ukraine, which was now part of Russian territory, Czechoslovakia got back all those areas which were snatched away from it in 1938 by Germany, Hungary and Poland. During the War years Benes and some of his companions had gone away to the United States. In the spring of 1945 they returned to Czechoslovakia and established a provisional government in co-operation with the leaders of the resistance movement. General elections were held in May 1946 in which the Communists secured about 40 per cent votes, following which an all-party government was constituted under the leadership of a communist leader, Clement Gottwald. The chief departments of the administration were given to the Communists. At the same time large-scale nationalisation of the key industries of the country was taken in hand. This work was easier because of the fact that during the war years most of these industries had been taken over by Germany and it was not at all difficult to take them under government control.

Because of the communist leadership in the government, and because of the nationalisation of 65 per cent of the industries of the country, it was very natural that Czechoslovakia was inclined towards Russia.

The Czechoslovakian Government drew up a two-year economic plan for its economic reconstruction under which the development of heavy industries was very much emphasised. Czechoslovakia needed large sums of money in order to carry out this plan. It could not get as much loan from America as it expected, because till then the United States had not drawn up any concrete plan for economic aid to other countries. When the Marshall Plan was launched in 1947, Czechoslovakia did not agree to join it. This did not mean that it had lost faith in individual democracy. Actually it was convinced that in the interests of the security of the country it has to depend upon Russia and it was necessary for it to orientate its foreign policy in accordance with Russian advice. The bitter experience that Czechoslovakia had of the Western democracies before the Second World War was still a festering sore in the eyes of the Czech people. In 1938, when England and France betrayed Czechoslovakia at Munich, it was Russia alone which had helped it. For these reasons, after the War Czechoslovakia had definitely gone under the Russian sphere of influence.<sup>1</sup>

Once having accepted the leadership of Russia in its foreign policy it was not possible for Czechoslovakia to prevent the interference of Russia in its internal policies. The influence of Communism increased considerably and during the national election of 1948, they kept under their control almost all sources of democratic influence. When the non-communist ministers resigned and expressed their opposition, Gottwald constituted a ministry entirely of communists. After this the administration, education, the daily papers, etc. were all brought under Com-

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1 At the Paris Peace Conference in 1946, Czechoslovakia supported Russia almost on all questions, and that may be the reason why in September 1949 America rejected its previous decision to advance a loan of 4 crore dollars to Czechoslovakia. At the same time, United States refused to carry on any further negotiations with Czechoslovakia on the question of advancing loans. The natural result of this was that Czechoslovakia became more and more dependent upon Russia for economic aid.

munist control with greater speed, and those who attempted to oppose were mercilessly crushed. The dead body of Jan Masaryk was found on a road near his house. By now the remaining industries, foreign trade, banking, etc., were also nationalised and distribution of land among the peasants as also its nationalisation was undertaken. The workers came under rigid government control, the hours of work were increased, and strikes were banned. Almost the entire trade of Czechoslovakia was now with Russia and the Balkan countries. In September 1948, after the death of Benes, it became comparatively easy to openly declare the association of Czechoslovakia with the Soviet Union.

**The Sovietisation of Poland.** The misfortune of Poland was that within three weeks of the outbreak of the War, it was incorporated in Germany and Russia. Its people, however, untiringly worked for their freedom and unity. After the division of Poland, a free Polish government was established in France under the leadership of General Sikorsky and its central office was later shifted to London. In June 1941, after Germany had attacked Russia, this government entered into a treaty with Russia. The Polish patriots believed that after this treaty, the division of Poland had been automatically quashed but, as was later revealed, Russia had no intention of leaving those areas of Poland which it had taken under its possession. The result was that after April 1943 the London Poles broke off their relations with Russia and Russia became more and more critical of the London Polish Government.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1943, after the death of Sikorsky, Mikolacyk constituted the London Government, and though he had leftist inclinations, no improvements were effected in the relations with Russia. Poland was liberated from German domination by the Russian armies. The underground movement in the German occupied areas received no assistance from Russia and they were crushed. In 1944, a Communist government was established in Poland which was immediately recog-

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1 The relations between Russia and Poland deteriorated following the incidents in the Katyn forests, where 10,000 Polish military officers had all of a sudden disappeared, and later their graves were found in the Katyn forests. When in April 1943 Germans occupied these provinces, they found the dead bodies of these officers and they charged Russia of having murdered them. When the International Red Cross Society proposed a thorough enquiry into the affair, Russia broke off all diplomatic relations with the Polish Government in London.

nised by Russia, but Britain and America refused to recognise it. At the Yalta Conference, the Western nations decided to compromise with Russia on the Polish question, and after giving to Poland some areas of Germany lying to its north and west, they accepted that the eastern provinces should remain with Russia. At the same time Russia agreed that it would press for the inclusion of some representatives of the Polish Government in London in the communist regime of Poland, and in the near future there would be free and unhampcr-ed elections. In the meantime, however, the relations between the Western nations and Russia were continuously deteriorating and it was directly influencing unfortunate Poland

In June 1945, a provisional government was organised in Poland headed by a Communist Prime Minister. The other important portfolios were also held by the Communists. In this government, however, Mikolacyk and John Stancyk were also included, and Britain and America recognised this government on the assurance that very soon elections would be held in the country. At the Potsdam conference held in July-August 1945, it was finally agreed that the German areas to the east of the Oder and the Niese and the greater portion of east Prussia would be given to Poland. Russia, however, had already entered into an agreement with Poland to this effect and so Poland felt itself obliged to Russia for this concession. In January 1947 'free and unhampcr-ed' elections were held. Even before that Mikolacyk and his companions were threatened and cajoled. The Communists had a very heavy majority in the elections, but the Western countries were strongly dissatisfied with the manner in which the elections were held. After the elections Poland became definitely inclined towards Russia. The administration and the constitution were also fundamentally altered. Those Communist leaders who refused to toe the Russian line were removed from office or arrested. Nationalisation was speeded up. The whole economy was reconstructed on Soviet lines. Land-lordism was abolished and huge estates were distributed among the peasants. The state now controlled the entire foreign trade, which was mainly with Russia. In foreign matters also Poland was entirely under Russian influence. On Russian advice Poland refused to join the Marshall Plan. During its period of Security Council membership (1946-48), Poland worked under Russian direction. Poland was under Russian sphere of



influence both from the geographical as also military points of view, and it was impossible to stop the growing intimacy between Russia and Poland.

**Balkan countries : Rumania.** During 1940-44 Rumania fought with Germany against Russia after which it came under Russian domination. In the beginning a coalition ministry was constituted under the Prime Ministership of Antonescuc. But with Russian inspiration Communist influence increased with every change in government. In February 1945 Vyshinsky went to Bucharest and under his direction an all-Communist government was constituted under Groza. All other political parties, and even those communists who were not prepared to toe the Russian line began to be crushed. For this loyalty to Russia, Rumania was awarded north Transylvania which had been in the possession of Hungary for the last five years. The new government in Rumania was recognised by Russia. Russia had now complete control over the economic life of the country, and its economy was now reorganised on Communist lines. In the beginning of 1947 the National Democratic Party of Groza, which actually was another name of the Communist party, got a huge majority in the elections<sup>1</sup>

After this attempts were made to crush the leaders of the opposition. Gen. Antonescuc was hanged and Maniu, the elderly leader of the peasants' party, was jailed. The administration of Rumania was modelled on Soviet lines, and when elections were held under this new constitution in March 1948, 93 per cent of the deputies elected to the National Assembly belonged to the Communist party, and from then Rumania became a part of the Soviet sphere.

**Yugoslavia.** Yugoslavia had also to bow to the wishes of Hitler during the Second World War. The nationalists of the country did not accept this position without a struggle. In this conflict the patriots of Yugoslavia could not for a long time face the might of the armies of Germany, Bulgaria and

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1. In these elections Communists got 48 lakh votes, while all the other opposition parties combined got only 18 lakh votes. It is clear that behind this heavy majority for the communists was the policy of terrorisation which was being worked up by Groza ruthlessly.

Hungary<sup>1</sup> But even after its surrender Yugoslavia continued its resistance, and as time advanced this resistance became more organised, powerful and influential Very soon the leadership of this entire movement came in the able hands of Marshal Tito. Tito was a Communist but he also burnt with the fire of patriotism He defeated many attacks of Italy and Germany with his small military guerilla units The military changes in 1944 profoundly influenced Yugoslavian politics Yugoslavia was also liberated like other countries of Eastern Europe by the Red Army After the end of German rule over Yugoslavia, a provisional government was constituted there under Tito which was recognised by Russia, England, France, and later by the United States The Constitution of Yugoslavia was drawn up on the lines of the Soviet Union, and although some non-Communists were kept in the ministry the real power was in the hands of the Communists. Yugoslavia had to suffer heavy losses during the Second World War and the country could be reconstructed only by a planned policy of economic development Even during the period of German occupation the country's economy was very much state-controlled and, therefore it could be imagined that there would not be much difficulty in following a Communist policy of state-control In Yugoslavia, as in other East European countries, there was huge investment of foreign capital in heavy industry and for Tito to expropriate British and French capital would have meant the raising of a thousand political difficulties The hesitation of Tito to follow such a course resulted in refusal by Russia to give it the required help In 1947 Tito prepared a five-year plan of development for Yugoslavia, but when the question of implementation came there grew up differences between Yugoslavia and Russia. Russia wanted that Yugoslavia's foreign policy should give greater attention to the requirements of Russia, whereas Yugoslavia wanted mainly to concentrate on its own development When Yugoslavia did not get the co-operation of Russia in its policy of nationalisation, then with great courage it liberated itself from the Russian sphere of influence and established closer economic ties with the Western countries After Yugoslavia adopted this new policy, America, Britain

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1. During the war, in the small country of Yugoslavia, 3,500 bridges were destroyed and thousands of factories and homes were burnt. It has been estimated that 17 lakh Yugoslavian youths lost their lives in the various battles and after the war five lakh orphans and naked and hungry people moved about on the streets of Yugoslavia

and France, which were not prepared to help till it had liberated itself from the Russian influence now gave it the fullest assistance. On the other hand Russia's anger increased. Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform, and Russia and its allies economically boycotted it. By the end of 1950 it had become clear that even though firmly believing in the Communist ideology, Yugoslavia was prepared to have the closest relations with Western nations. This was an unprecedented experiment in co-existence.

**Bulgaria.** Bulgaria also had to join the war on the side of Hitler. There were, however, innumerable elements in the country which were sympathetic to Russia. When Russian armies marched westward towards the end of 1944, Bulgaria was liberated from Nazi influence and a provisional coalition government was constituted, and it was controlled by Communists. This government began to mercilessly crush the Fascists and democrats. Under the circumstances it was not possible for the Western countries to recognise this provisional government. In the elections held in 1945 the provisional government got 70 per cent of the votes but the Western nations objected to the method of elections. Russia, however, immediately recognised the new regime. In September 1946, the Bulgarian People's Republic was declared, and when elections were held towards the end of October the Communists got a heavy majority. After that an openly Communist government was established in Bulgaria under the Prime Ministership of Dimitrov. Some leaders of the opposition parties including Nicola Petrov were hanged and some were imprisoned for long terms. In December 1947 Bulgaria accepted Soviet Constitution and became a part of the Soviet Bloc.

**Attempts at European reconstruction** It is difficult to estimate the total loss in Europe of men and money during the Second World War. It is said that more than a crore of soldiers and nearly 2 crores of civilians had to lose their lives. Apart from this, a larger number of persons were maimed and mutilated. Properties worth 300 to 400 billions were destroyed. But worse than all this was that the will power of Europe was crushed, and it became impossible for it to save itself without foreign assistance. It was only the United States which could offer such help. In 1943, the United Nations

had set up an organisation with the object of helping other war-torn states with the co-operation of the military or local authorities. This organisation is called the United Nations Recovery and Rehabilitation Administration. During the last months of the War, and after the end of the War, this organisation saved thousands of people from starvation and death in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Besides, a body called the International Refugee Organisation was also set up to help the refugees. In July 1944, as a result of the Bretton Woods Conference, an International Bank and an International Monetary Fund for economic reconstruction were instituted with the object of helping the devastated countries in their work of reconstruction, and to give stability to the currencies of these countries. Apart from this, Britain and America gave huge loans to these nations. In the post-war years, an International Trade Organisation was also set up under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation. In the meantime, the Western nations, and especially the United States, thought that Russia had plunged headlong, with the help of its armies, in the propagation of the Communist ideology not only in Eastern Europe but also in Western Europe. The passing of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, etc., under the Soviet sphere of influence had brought about a shaky situation for France and Italy. Under the circumstances it was natural to make the work of economic aid a means for the fulfilment of political objectives. In March 1947, the American President announced a policy which is better known as the 'Truman Doctrine'. Till now England was engaged in preventing the spread of Russian influence in Greece and Turkey, but now its economic situation had deteriorated to such an extent that it became essential for it to withdraw its armies from there. America then advanced to take up that position. President Truman believed that America should help all those countries which were trying to resist the domination of armed minorities within their country, or the influence of external powers. In following this policy, however, America did not always consider it necessary to support only democratic forces in the countries it was helping, and more often than not, in its anxiety to oppose Communism, it encouraged fascist tendencies.

#### **The Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty.**

In the summer of 1947, America announced a huge and comprehensive plan of economic aid for saving the tottering

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economy of Europe from total collapse and to prevent the passing of the countries of Western Europe under Soviet sphere of influence. This is the famous Marshall Plan. A conference was held at Paris to find out ways of implementing this plan. From the very beginning Russia believed that this plan was directed against it and, therefore, it refused to co-operate with it as also its associate countries. As a result the differences between the East and the West deepened. Russia took the eastern countries of Europe under its economic and political control with greater firmness. As against this, the Western European countries used the Marshall Plan for their economic and political reconstruction. In order to implement this Plan the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (O.E.E.C.) was created. This organisation studied the economic requirements of Western European countries and made all efforts to get American aid for them. At the same time rapid steps were taken to bring together the countries of Western Europe.

The first five-year scheme under the Marshall Plan was completed by 1952. Funds for implementing this Plan were received from America and therefore it was inevitable that American influence increased over the Western European countries. America not only gave economic aid to the European countries but also organised them in a military way. From this point of view an organisation called the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (N.A.T.O.) was created comprising of countries lying on the Atlantic coast. It was, in fact, further development of the organisation created in March 1948 comprising of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg known as the Benelux countries, which was later joined by England and France. In the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, besides these five countries, America, Canada and Norway also joined after the Treaty was signed. Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Portugal joined it later. The main object of this organisation was to prevent aggression of Russia in Western Europe. The natural consequence of the consolidation of Western Europe in a military organisation under the leadership of the United States was that the Soviet Union further tightened its control over Eastern Europe and consequently the dangers of a war between the United States and Russia increased. America believes that helping Europe militarily is complementary to the economic aid given by it, and without this it is not possible to defend Western Europe. How-

ever, in its efforts to save Western Europe from Communism, America seems to forget that its main object is to strengthen the democratic forces in Western Europe. If Communism is a powerful force as an ideology, it is equally certain that its challenge should be met by an ideology which is as sharp and inspiring as Communism. Very often it appears that America forgets this ideological background of the present conflict, and is organising the Western European countries for a war against Russia.